

NEW MASSES

February
1931

15c

HUGO/
GELLERT

Times.

"All the News That's
Fit to Print."

Congress Committee.
RECOMMENDS
Deportation

**FISH URGES
OUTLAWING
COMMUNIST
PARTY**

FROM
CONGRESS

TO THE
WORKERS

VALENTINE NUMBER

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A STATEMENT

The *New Masses* has been in existence for nearly five years. During that time it has, under all sorts of difficulties, been doing a pioneer job—the job of developing and publishing literature and art of a proletarian character. It has been the only magazine in the English language anywhere in the world doing this work, the only magazine trying to blaze new cultural trails along the path of the workingclass struggle.

Has it done this job well? Opinions differ. We ourselves aren't satisfied with the *New Masses*. We feel it has fallen down seriously on a number of occasions. It has, for example, failed to dramatize and treat adequately enough the burning issue of unemployment; it has failed to wage a consistent struggle against the war danger. It has failed in other respects to become an integral part of the fight for workingclass emancipation. We feel, moreover, that we have reached only a small section of those workers who should be the readers and most active supporters of the *New Masses*; and we are certain that, despite our good work in developing new worker writers and artists, there are many more with whom we have thus far established no contact.

The report of the American delegation to the international conference of revolutionary writers and artists, published in this issue, places squarely before us the task of improving the *New Masses* "by connecting it more organically with the struggles of the workingclass and making it in every respect the cultural weapon of the class-conscious workers and revolutionary intellectuals of this country." This is a big job and we feel that we can't do it alone. The *New Masses* is not the magazine of a small group of individuals, but the organ of an entire movement. It's up to the readers of the *New Masses*—as well as the contributors—to make necessary improvements. It's up to those who are not yet our readers, the many thousands of workers and radical intellectuals whom we haven't yet reached, to help make the *New Masses* all that it should be.

We want concrete criticism, concrete suggestions, concrete discussion of our problems and tasks. Not so much praise or blame of individual writers or artists, as a consideration of the general character of the *New Masses*, what's wrong and what's right with it, what its function in the revolutionary movement should be *and how it can best fulfill this function*.

We want not only workers individually to take part in this discussion, but workers' clubs too. Their activities have received space in our Workers' Art section—a department which we hope to strengthen—but we want them to feel that the entire *New Masses* is their concern.

To Negro workers and intellectuals we make a special appeal. The *New Masses* has published the work of a number of Negro writers—Langston Hughes, Gilbert Lewis and others; we have printed articles about Negro work-songs and songs of protest. We intend in the future to devote even more attention to this work and we appeal to the Negro masses of this country to help us.

Send in your letters and get your friends and fellow-workers to do likewise. Let's have a barrage for the next issue, and if your paper bullets strike vulnerable spots, so much the better. And remember, be as brief and concrete as possible.

The *New Masses* is also going to arrange open forums—possibly once a month—where editors, contributors and readers can get together and discuss every aspect of the magazine.

We also want more contributions from workers, more stories, poems, articles, drawings, worker correspondence dealing with those vast millions whose lives and struggles find no place in the genteel "art" magazines.

And while you're helping to make the *New Masses* into the kind of magazine you want it to be, don't forget to keep it alive. That means: SUBSCRIBE—and get others to subscribe.

THE EDITORS

A Meeting of NEW MASSES Readers

On Friday, February 13, at 8:30 P. M., the first meeting of *New Masses* readers will be held at the John Reed Club Rooms, at 102 West 14 Street (top floor). No admission will be charged, no collections made. We ask workers, students, intellectuals, all our readers, to join our editors and staff in a frank discussion of our problems. Go over recent issues, make notes on them, or write a brief statement of your opinions, and bring them to the meeting of *New Masses* readers on Friday, February 13.

NEW MASSES

1910—Fifth Year of the New Masses -- 1926 -- Twenty First Year of the Masses—1931

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NUMBER 9

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NOTES OF THE MONTH

Hamilton Fish, the muscular tenement house owner and insurance man, has turned in his report. For eight months he and his committee of congressional nitwits have been listening respectfully to the rehearsed alarms of the professional paytriots from Manhattan to Los Angeles. They have also visited Camp Nitgedaiget, bullied Amtorg executives, and writhed in their seats while Comrades Foster, Olgin, Engdahl, Gannes, Simons, Newton et al gave them an earful about the miseries of life under capitalism.

Fish And Plain Herring—

This committee to "investigate Communism" was formed as the result of the publicity given a certain set of "documents" forged in the nest of Djamgaroff, Bernadsky and other tsarist Black Hundred emigres who receive financial support from the sister-in-law of Secretary of State Stimson. Said documents, "purporting" to link the Soviet trading corporation in this country with Communist activities, were peddled about Washington for several weeks before the Fish committee was authorized. They were offered for inspection of Ralph Easley, Secretary of Matthew Woll's National Civic Federation, a motley united front of open shoppers and labor racketeers. Finally, they were either purchased or handed as a white elephant to New York City's official floor walker, Gardenia Grover Whalen, then the head of the municipal Cossacks. Being a willing bell hop for any group that will assure him first-page spread, Grover eagerly embraced the documents handed him by the Romanoff-Woll combination. But, unfortunately for Grover and the Civic Federation, an enterprising newspaper man made a little investigation and found the print shop, the type fonts, and the press where the "Moscow" letter heads had been set up. The address was 204 East 10th St.

In spite of this discomfiting exposure the brassy Whalen, flanked by the tsarist advisors, went before the Fish Committee and told the same yarn that he had issued repeatedly to the press. What's more he tried to frame the reporter who had caught him with the forgeries. When he saw that even the capitalist press was skeptical he whispered something about giving the committee more in "secret session". All of which was calculated to give the average reader of tabloids the impression that the lying chief cop still had something up his sleeve. But now it appears this was only another stall. For the Fish Committee in its final, official and definite report dismisses the heavily publicized documents as so much toilet paper. It says, "we find that the testimony failed to establish the genuineness of the so-called 'Whalen documents'". So that's that. But the committee cannot let the now deposed chief of the New York gendarmerie down too hard. It proceeds to praise the savage police who, on Whalen's and Walker's orders, have repeatedly broken open the heads of strikers and the unemployed, and have even murdered unarmed pickets such as Steve Katovis. The committee praises a lot of other things, for example,

the American Federation of Labor and the Conciliation Service of the federal Department of Labor—two of the most effective strike-breaking bodies in the world, not excepting the Baldwin Felts Detective Agency.

All Those Whose Dreams Are Disturbed—

The Fish report, is of course, lousey with errors which any Young Pioneer in the fifth grade could detect blindfolded. The roster of the district executives of the Communist Party might easily have been extracted from the Lusk Report of 1919 which, as a matter of fact, is quoted reverently by Fish. And it cost the "tax-payers" at least \$25,000 (Fish has not yet rendered his final accounting, expenses for dicks, dinners for Gaston P. Means and other "technical" assistance) to give these Congressmen their cross country joy ride.

But the gorgeous assininity of the findings is no reason for receiving this report in a facetious manner as do the Scripps-Howard liberals and the Heywood Broun social fascists. In spite of his clumsiness, ignorance, and all-around immaturity, Fish is something of a symbol. He represents the anti-soviet bloc all hot and bothered about the triumphant progress of the Five Year Plan. Every one is getting nervous about this *Pyatiletka*. Capitalists fear the "dumping" of soviet goods, liberals like Edmund Wilson are aroused to the need for more state planning under capitalism with a view to a painless development toward a castrated Communism minus Marx and Lenin. The "militant" Socialists, while still morally indignant over the Soviet treatment of grafting delicatessen dealers, are demanding of their elders a more "realistic" policy toward Russia than plain White Guardism.

In a sense, Ham Fish speaks for all of those whose dreams are disturbed by the march of the workers and peasants in the U.S. S.R. He is the very open mouthpiece of the most reactionary groups in American society.

A Mess of Fish For the Workers—

Let's see what the Fish Committee offers the 10,000,000 unemployed workers and the tens of millions who live under the terror and insecurity of capitalism in the world's richest nation:

1. An official spy system worse than the one that harried the militant workers in the days of A. Mitchell Palmer and William J. Burns. Well-paid stool pigeons and sadists breaking into homes and offices, dragging workers from beds and torturing them like they did Salsedo, framing them like they did Sacco and Vanzetti.
2. Deportations of all who question the divine right of the Morgan-Mellon-Hoover-Stimson hierarchy to run the western hemisphere.
3. Denaturalization of all who strike under the leadership of any



Maurice Becker

TOO BAD EVEN FOR THE GUY WHO ORDERED IT. (*The press thinks the report has "faults" and the N. Y. Evening Post suggests it "should be disregarded".*)

union distasteful to Attorney Matthew Woll and his associated red-baiters.

4. Declaration as non-mailable and non-transportable not only of *Vida Obrero*, *The Young Worker* and *Liberator*, already suppressed—but of the *Daily Worker*, the *New Masses*, *Labor Unity* and other revolutionary periodicals.

5. Destruction of any paper telling the truth (to Fish, of course, it would be "false rumors") about the rise in bank failures.

6. Illegalization of the Communist Party, the only party that has any connection with, or makes an effort to speak for the workers and poor farmers of the United States.

In a word, Fish and his faction would suppress every semblance of class consciousness among the workers. They would—and they do—club the heads of the unemployed and smash the meetings of those who demand unemployment insurance and work or wages.

The March of Hungry Men—

And just as his report appears Fish is getting his answer. In cities from Oakland, Cal. to Boston, Mass. the unemployed are marching on city halls, state houses—and finally Congress itself to demand the most simple and immediate relief from the exploiting class government.

"We're going to organize the unemployed and take food; we will not starve", a delegate of the unemployed council told the welfare committee of the Cleveland city council when the city manager informed the jobless the city could do nothing for them. In Duluth 3,000 unemployed walked into a city council meeting and put their demands to the mayor for over an hour. In Youngstown, they seized the city flop house and established a temporary workers' council till ousted by the police. Then they forced their way into the city council and were promised a few concessions. In Chicago, after a hunger march of 15,000, some workers walked into restaurants and when bills for food were presented they answered "Charge it to the Mayor". In St. Paul, 10,000 stormed the state capitals, burst into the legislature, and forced the governor to see them. In Sacramento, 10,000 marched to demand immediate relief from the new goevrnor. And in New York they were met with the blackjacks of the bloody Tammany police.

This story was repeated in scores of industrial centers and state capitals. In some cities the workers were driven back and beaten by the police. In other cities the force of numbers was too much for the "local fathers", and they had to listen to the representatives of the councils of the unemployed. In other places concessions

were gained and small amounts for immediate relief were voted out of the city budget.

But invariably the workers on these marches, many of them for the first time, have become conscious of the fact that capitalism, and capitalist law and capitalist police and capitalist Fish committees, stand for property rights, exploitation, wage cuts, and hand-outs of stinking soup to the starving while the parasites winter in Florida. They learn that capitalism means poverty, unemployment, and the ruthless suppression of the workers. And the desperate farmers of Oklahoma, forced to arm and break into grocery stores, have also learned a lot about class government and Red Cross starvation doles.

The only effective answer to Fish is more hunger marching, more striking, more demands for immediate relief, more fights against evictions, and more struggle to end the whole barbarous capitalist dictatorship.

4 Poems by Langston Hughes

To Certain Negro Leaders

*Voices crying in the wilderness
At so much per word
From the white folks:
"Be meek and humble,
All you niggers,
And do not cry
Too loud."*

Tired

*I am so tired of waiting,
Aren't you,
For the world to become good
And beautiful and kind?
Let us take a knife
And cut the world in two—
And see what worms are eating
At the rind.*

Call to Creation

*Listen!
All you beauty-makers,
Give up beauty for a moment.
Look at harshness, look at pain,
Look at life again.
Look at hungry babies crying,
Listen to the rich men lying,
Look at starving China dying.
Hear the rumble in the East:
"In spite of all,
Life must not cease."
In India with folded arms,
In China with the guns,
In Africa with bitter smile—
See where the murmur runs:
"Life must not cease,
Because the fat and greedy ones
Proclaim their thieving peace."
Their peace far worse than war and death—
For this is better than living breath:
Free! To be Free!
Listen!
Futile beauty-makers—
Work for a while with the pattern-breakers!
Come for a march with the new-world-makers:
Let beauty be!*

A Christian Country

*God slumbers in a back alley
With a gin bottle in His hand.
Come on, God, get up and fight
Like a man.*



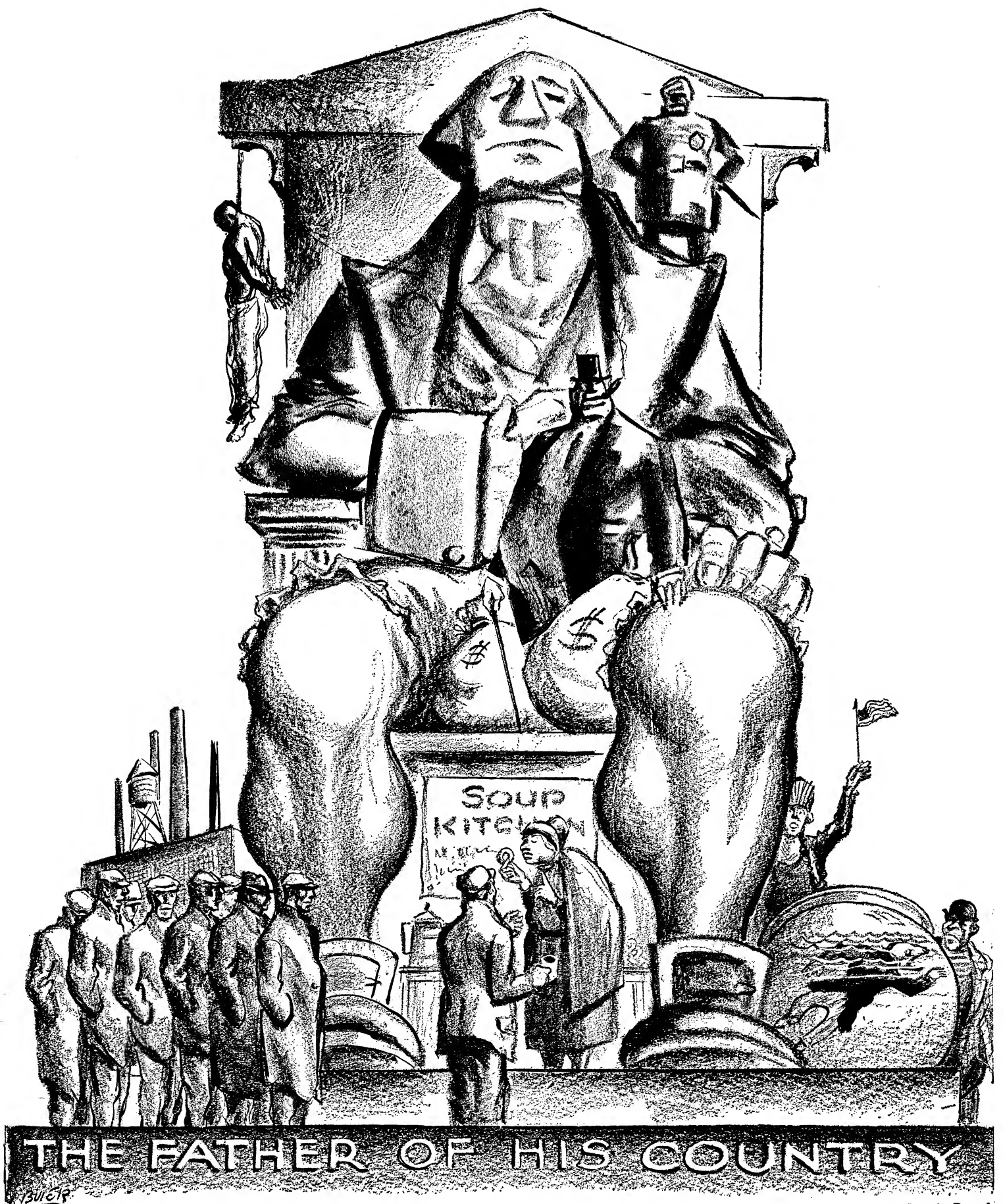
Maurice Becker

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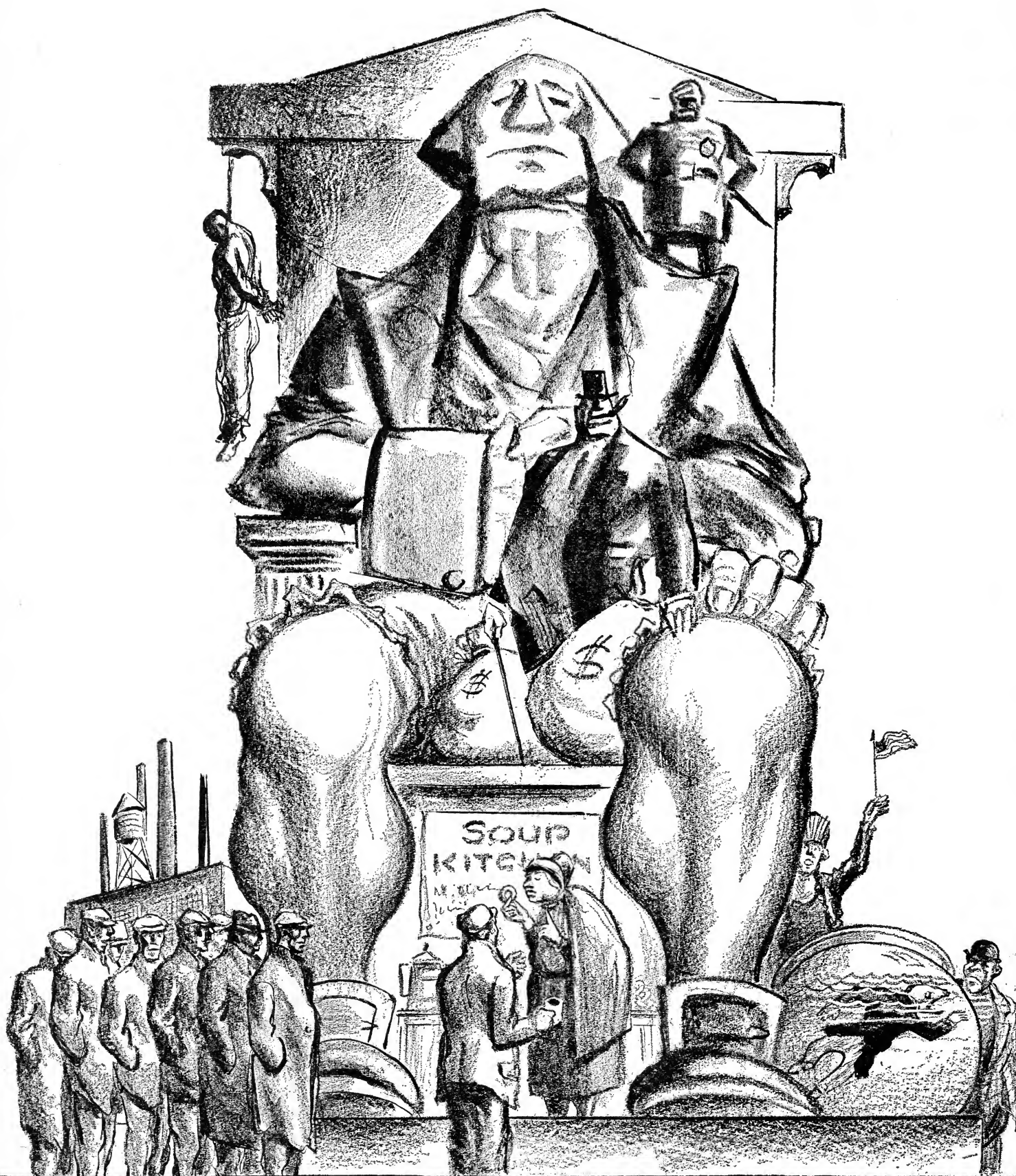


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Jacob Burek



THE FATHER OF HIS COUNTRY

Jacob Burek

THE CHARKOV CONFERENCE OF REVOLUTIONARY WRITERS

At Charkov, the capital of the Socialist Soviet Republic of the Ukraine, there was held from November 6 to November 15, 1930, the Second World Plenum (Conference) of the International Bureau of Revolutionary Literature. Revolutionary writers and artists from 22 countries and five continents, as well as numerous representatives from the Soviet Union, gathered to discuss their problems and tasks—creative, organizational and political—and adopted a common international platform and specific programs for each country.

Since the first conference of revolutionary writers and artists was held at Moscow in 1927, capitalist prosperity has gone the way of all soap-bubbles; millions unemployed and starving—nine million in the U. S. A. alone—while the entire capitalist world is in the greatest economic crisis in its history. The Second World Plenum of the International Bureau of Revolutionary Literature met at the height of this crisis, at a time when the class struggle within each country, as well as the rivalries among the various capitalist countries, have been tremendously sharpened, with the shadow of war growing larger daily.

And for contrast:

The Second World Plenum of the International Bureau of Revolutionary Literature met at a time when the Soviet Union is driving full steam ahead toward Socialism. The First Plenum in 1927 was held at the end of the reconstruction period; the Second Plenum took place in the midst of the Five-Year Plan, the most stupendous undertaking in the history of the world, when Soviet economy is leaping forward to equal and surpass the economic level of the most advanced capitalist countries. And in place of the starvation and mass misery of the capitalist world, we find unemployment completely wiped out in Soviet Russia and the material and cultural level of its 150,000,000 workers and peasants being constantly raised.

If we consider the character of the Plenum itself, we find many changes, a higher level of development since the first conference of revolutionary writers and artists in 1927. The first Plenum was really improvised; individual writers and artists, who happened to be present in the Soviet Union for the celebration of the tenth anniversary of the Bolshevik Revolution, were brought together, adopted a minimum program and established the International Bureau of Revolutionary Literature with Bela Illes, the noted Hungarian revolutionary writer, as secretary. The political platform at this conference contained only two tasks: struggle against imperialist war and struggle against fascism. On the creative side there were still discussions as to whether such a thing as proletarian literature existed, and proletarian literature even in the Soviet Union had not yet established its undisputed hegemony, was still waging a battle against the literary tendencies represented by the so-called "fellow-travelers."

One of the outstanding features of the Second World Plenum was the fact that most of the delegates came as representatives of organizations. In the three years that had passed the powerful Association of Proletarian Revolutionary Writers of Germany had sprung up; organizations had been established in Hungary, Austria and China and the foundations laid for a French organization, while in Poland no less than three proletarian writers' groups had been formed. In the United States the John Reed Club had been firmly established while the *New Masses* since 1928, had been reorganized on a more proletarian basis.

In conformity with the changed political situation and with the higher organizational and ideological level of the entire proletarian cultural movement, it was decided to adopt a political platform of a broader and more concrete character. No longer is it sufficient for a member of the International Bureau to subscribe to the struggle against imperialist war and fascism; if you are a revolutionary writer or artist, you must fight not only against the war danger, but, more positively, in defence of the fatherland of all the workers and revolutionary intellectuals of the world, the Soviet Union. And if you are a revolutionary writer or artist, you must fight not only against open fascism, but also against concealed

fascism which parades under the mask of "socialism"—that more insidious type that has come to be known as social-fascism.

On the creative side there was no longer any dispute about the existence of a vigorous proletarian literature in a number of such Trotsky regarding the possibility of creating proletarian literature in capitalist countries had been decisively repudiated by the very existence of a vigorous proletarian literature in a number of such countries. The conference therefore devoted its attention to a discussion of the creative method in proletarian literature, a discussion whose general character was defined in a long report given by the Marxist theoretician, Leopold Auerbach, secretary of the Association of Russian Proletarian Writers.

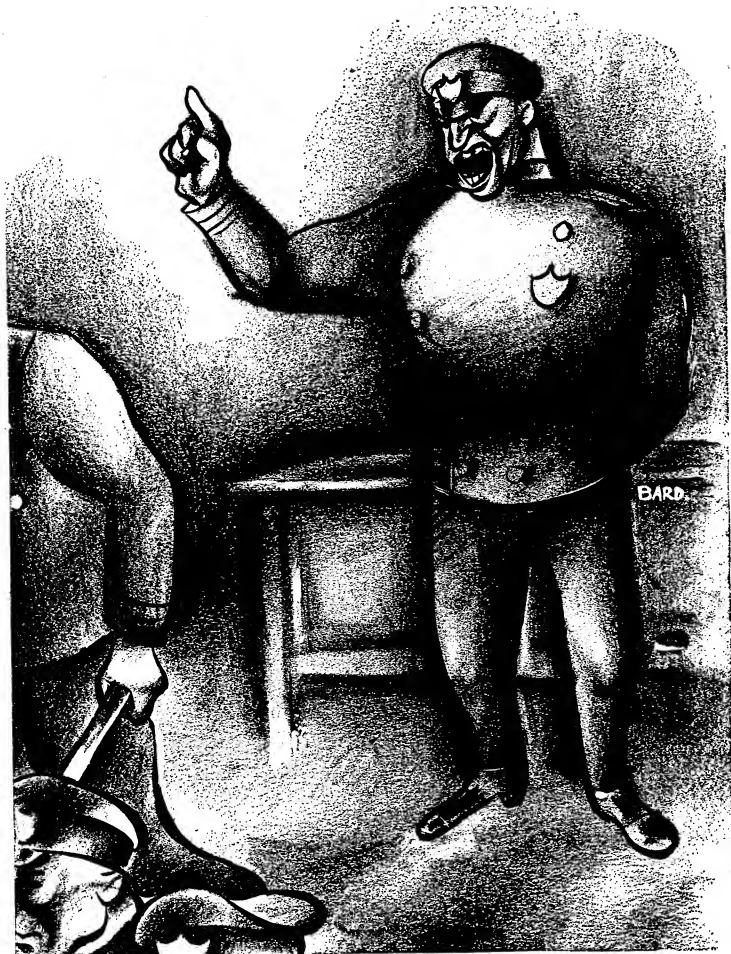
Since the First Plenum of the International Bureau there had also been a number of defections from the ranks, notably those of Panait Istrati, the French-Rumanian writer, and Diego Rivera, the Mexican artist. Though at the first Plenum Istrati and Rivera had represented opposite tendencies, Istrati being an ultra-left and Rivera advocating a right-wing program, both have since found a common platform, the platform of renegacy from the revolutionary movement, with Istrati particularly distinguishing himself by his dirty, lying attacks on the Soviet Union.

The American delegates at the Plenum, representing the John Reed Club and the *New Masses*, were Fred Ellis, Michael Gold, William Gropper, Joshua Kunitz, A. B. Magil and Harry Alan Potamkin. Of these Gropper had also been present at the first Plenum in 1927. There were, in addition, two guest delegates from America, John Herrmann and Josephine Herbst, representing the sympathetic writers. Many regrets were expressed that John Dos Passos, who had been invited, was unable to attend. From Germany there came as guest delegates Ernst Glaeser, the author of the war book, *Class of 1902* and its recently published sequel, *Peace*.

The 22 countries represented at the conference included, in addition to Europe and the United States, China, Japan (the Japanese delegation represented one of the oldest and strongest organizations of proletarian writers in the world), Egypt and Brazil. The representation from Latin-America, consisting of the lone Brazilian delegate, was considered entirely inadequate, and the establishment of closer contacts with the revolutionary writers and artists of Latin America is one of the tasks especially assigned to the United States. Among the delegates there were such noted Soviet writers as Fadeyev, author of *The Nineteen*, Panferov, author of *Bruski* and Ognev, author of *The Diary of a Communist Schoolboy* (all three books have been translated into English). The German delegation, which was the strongest of those outside the Soviet Union, included Ludwig Renn, author of the famous novel, *War*; the German revolutionary poet, Johannes R. Becher; Anna Seghers, author of *The Revolt of the Fishermen*, which won the Kleist Prize in 1928; Egon Erwin Kisch of *Paradies Amerika*; and the remarkable new proletarian writer, Hans Marchwitza, a former miner, whose first novel, *Sturm Auf Essen* (*Storm in Essen*) was hailed at the Plenum as one of the greatest achievements in the field of proletarian literature.

The entire work of the Plenum pivoted around the war danger with particular stress on the necessity of organizing the defence of the Soviet Union. The keynote of this activity was struck by Johannes R. Becher who himself faces six indictments for high treason as a result of a speech he made to the Red Army while on a visit to the Soviet Union. Becher, who in 1914-18 was the first German poet to sound the call for a revolutionary struggle against the imperialist war, again, in a challenging speech lasting an hour and a half, sounded the call to action. In the name of the revolutionary writers, artists and intellectuals of the entire world he declared their readiness to oppose the war manoeuvres of their own ruling class and to fight with arms in hand in defense of the First Workers Republic.

Speaking for the sympathetic writers, Ernst Glaeser phrased the sentiment of the Plenum in vivid and laconic fashion: "There was



Phil Bard

"Now remember youse guys is on the Radical Squad. Don't go sockin' any well dressed people!"

a time when I said, 'All hands off the Soviet Union', now I say, 'All hands for the Soviet Union!'"

The American delegation played a particularly responsible role at the Plenum. Germany and the United States were declared the two most important capitalist countries for the development of a proletarian revolutionary literature, and Germany and the United States were the only two that gave reports on the work in their countries before the entire conference. In the case of all other countries this was done at the meetings of the various national commissions. In addition, the tremendous importance of the United States in the fight against imperialist war was recognized when the chairmanship of the Anti-War Commission was assigned to America. Each national commission was so constituted so as to include several members of foreign delegations, one of whom served as chairman. The Anglo-American Commission was unusually fortunate in having as its chairman Ludwig Renn, whose great experience, earnestness and comradely understanding helped us greatly in clarifying our problems. Among the members of the Anglo-American Commission were also two noted Soviet novelists, Fadeyev and Panferov, and Louis Aragon of the French "sur-realists" group, many of whose members recently went over in a body to the revolutionary movement.

The English members of the Anglo-American Commission were Robert Ellis, editor of *The Worker*, and Harold Heslop, a former coal miner, who is the author of several proletarian novels, some of which have found English and American publishers, while others have been rejected because of their revolutionary character and have had to be published in the Soviet Union. The two English delegates represented no organized group as there exists as yet no association of the revolutionary writers of England; but they declared their determination to lay the basis for such an organization, as well as for a proletarian cultural magazine, and they look to the U. S. A.—to the John Reed Club and the *New Masses*—for help.

Elections to the permanent bodies of the International Bureau resulted in Michael Gold and A. B. Magil being chosen to the

Presidium (Executive Council) and Harry Alan Potamkin to the Control Commission, while Bill Gropper was named by the Artists Commission as a member of its Presidium.

The political platform for America, which must be accepted by the John Reed Club and the *New Masses* before they can be affiliated to the International Bureau, consists of eight points. Of these, four have already been mentioned as constituting the general political platform for the entire International Bureau. The other four are: 1. struggle for the development and strengthening of the revolutionary labor movement; 2. struggle against white chauvinism (all forms of Negro persecution and discrimination) and against the persecution of the foreign-born; 3. struggle against petty-bourgeois tendencies in our work; 4. struggle against the imprisonment of revolutionary writers and artists, as well as other class war prisoners throughout the world.

In connection with the last point it may be mentioned that in Germany 56 revolutionary writers and journalists are now in jail. One of this group of class war prisoners, Paul Koerner, who had just been released after serving a year in jail, was present at the Plenum and brought greetings from his comrades behind the bars.

In addition to the political platform, a concrete Program of Action for the United States, intended to guide every phase of our work, was drawn up. This Program of Action was embodied in a resolution unanimously adopted by the Plenum and elaborated at a final meeting of the American delegation held after the conclusion of the conference. It contains ten points:

1. The widening of the activity of the John Reed Club and the *New Masses* in two directions: a) extending the proletarian base of our movement by drawing in new proletarian elements; b) winning over of radicalized intellectuals.

2. Special attention must be paid to the development of Negro writers and artists and to stimulating cultural activity among the Negro masses. The *New Masses* has already done some good work in this direction, but the John Reed Club has neglected it entirely.

3. The John Reed Club and the *New Masses* to take the initiative in organizing on a national scale a federation of all cultural groups in all languages; all members of this federation to be on an equal standing, neither the John Reed Club nor the *New Masses* exercising hegemony.

4. The strengthening of the theoretical aspects of our work—which have been almost entirely neglected—by holding discussions and by taking steps to secure the translation into English of the classics of Marxist literary criticism such as Plekhanov, Franz Mehring, etc., as well as the writing of a book of Marxist criticism based on specific American conditions.

5. The establishment of closer contacts with workers by arranging discussion forums and in general drawing the workers into the discussion of our problems.

6. The strengthening of the contacts of the John Reed Club with its members outside of New York and the organization of branches wherever possible.

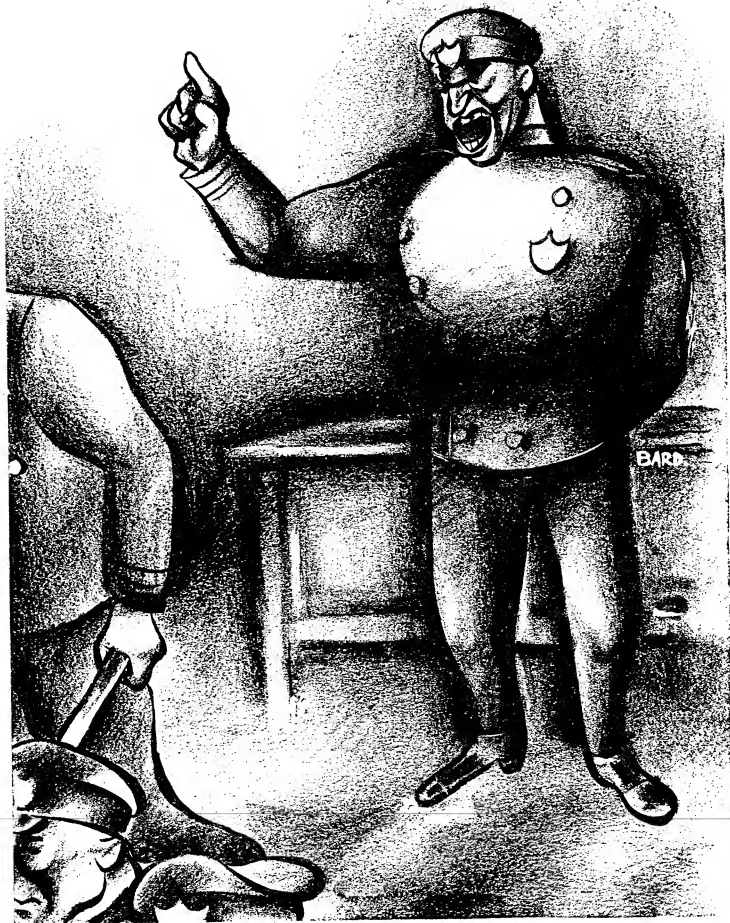
7. The establishment of closer contacts with revolutionary cultural organizations and publications in other countries. (The American delegation has already made a number of such contacts in the Soviet Union and Germany.) It is particularly important to aid in every possible way cultural activity in England, Canada, the Latin-American countries and the colonies of American imperialism.

8. The furthering of the publication of mass pamphlets such as the one already sponsored by the John Reed Club: *Steve Katov is: The Life and Death of a Worker*.

9. The organization of what are known as "agitprop troupes" on the order of the Blue Blouses in the Soviet Union and similar groups in Germany. These traveling troupes perform at workers' clubs, at meetings and demonstrations, using a cabaret technique, with a timely, constantly changing repertoire drawn from current political events and the struggles of the workingclass.

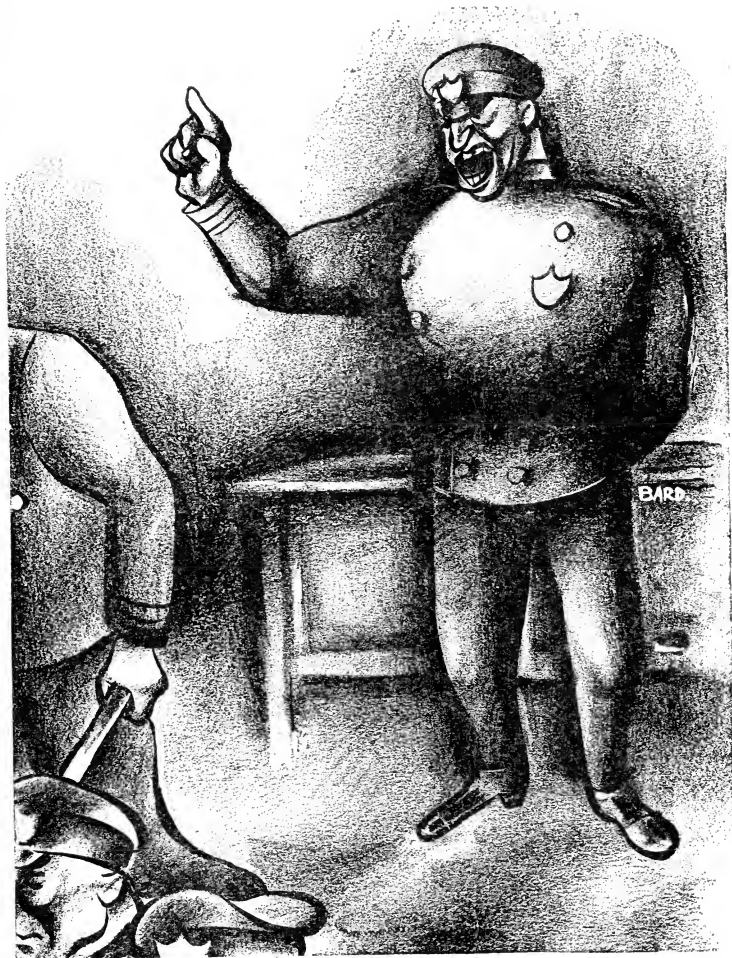
10. The strengthening of the *New Masses* by the election of a cooperative editorial board (this had already been done) and the improvement of its contents by connecting it more organically with the struggles of the workingclass and making it in every respect the cultural organ of the class-conscious workers and revolutionary intellectuals of this country. Discussion meetings with readers, as well as discussions in the columns of the magazine, will aid greatly in achieving this aim.

We want to particularly emphasize the first point of this Pro-



Phil Bard

"Now remember youse guys is on the Radical Squad. Don't go sockin' any well dressed people!"



Phil Bard
"Now remember youse guys is on the Radical Squad. Don't go sockin' any well dressed people!"

TO MY VALENTINE—

1. From a cop to the speakeasy owner



I. Klein

Speakeasily, dear citizen,
The copper has a proper yen
For legs that fill elected boots,—
Our hearts shall beat in sweet cahoots.

2. From the speakeasy owner to the judge



Otto Soglow

My sense of license circumvents the law,
I dispense, spare no expense, to grease the itching paw.
'Tis well I know that otherwise your eyes I cannot budge
From traffic mine of beer and wine, my valentine, O judge!

3. From the judge to the corporation heads



Walter Quirt

As judge of the court I'm a very good sort
To the sort who are good to me.
I send, in my hat, a red herring fat
With the oil of conspiracy.

4. From the corporation heads to their master



Phil Bard

We're the cos. and the corps. and the limiteds
Who confess to a fervor fanatic;
Incorporate souls who love Aunty Reds
With a passion Morganatic.

Jingles by Harry L. Potamkin

gram of Action because the character of our entire work will be determined by the extent to which this is fulfilled. How are we to go about fulfilling the first part of this point, the drawing in of new proletarian elements? First and most important of all, we must establish close contacts with the worker correspondents throughout the country. This doesn't mean that we are to duplicate the work being done by the *Daily Worker*, *Labor Unity* and other labor papers. Our task will be to develop these worker correspondents who show a definite flair for something more than bare reports of the conditions in their shops. Such worker correspondents should be drawn into the John Reed Club and into the work of the *New Masses*. Discussion meetings, arranged especially for worker correspondents, are one of the best ways of forming contacts with them. In Germany, especially, a great deal has been done in this field.

The widening of the proletarian base of our movement also includes the drawing into our ranks of any worker who is making his first attempts at writing, no matter how immature. All the journalists of the labor press—and for that matter all other journalists who accept our political platform—should also become members of the John Reed Club and participate actively in our work. We should support the work being done by the Saturday feature page of the *Daily Worker* which is developing new proletarian writers and artists.

Concerning the second part of this point, the winning over of radicalized intellectuals: we want to warn against any tendency to regard this as something which was included as an afterthought, purely perfunctory in character. This would lead us directly into the straightjacket of sectarianism, a danger which the Plenum declared must be fought in all countries. On the contrary, the Plenum laid great stress on the importance of winning over the radicalized intellectuals, particularly the younger generation, and it was considered one of the shortcomings of our conference that so few of the sympathetic writers were present. The profound crisis which has shaken large sections of the intellectuals throughout the world and forced them to grapple with social realities is apparent in America today. Humanism is an expression of this phenomenon—an expression which stands for cultural reaction, the counterpart of the fascist tendencies in American society today. The young American intellectual, driven up the blind-alley of a dying culture, is likely to fly to the "humanist" light of Babbitt-More-Eliot and Company, the great holy light of fascism, the church, snobism and creative sterility. It is the best elements among these young intellectuals that we should win over, not by demanding that they accept our program 100 percent, but by drawing them into our ranks, guiding them and helping them to clarify their social outlook.

In addition, there are intellectuals whose support can be enlisted on specific issues. Men like Theodore Dreiser, Edmund Wil-

son, Waldo Frank and Professor Frans Boas supported the campaigns of the John Reed Club against the anti-Soviet holy crusade of a year ago and in defense of the southern political prisoners. There are many such intellectuals who are ready to join us in our fight against American reaction.

A special program of activity was outlined by the Artists Commission, which also emphasizes the drawing in of new proletarian and intellectual elements. The program for America includes the organization of an active art school throughout the country for children and adults, the strengthening of the ideological side of art work, the holding of lectures and exhibitions at workers' clubs, the organization of shock troops to work for the labor press and shop papers, and the arrangement of exchange exhibitions with foreign countries (this is already being done by the John Reed Club).

The American delegation to the Second World Plenum of the International Bureau of Revolutionary Literature appeals to the workers of America: support the activities of the John Reed Club, support the *New Masses*, support the other cultural organizations of the workingclass. And we make a special appeal to the young intellectuals of America: break with the dying culture of a dying class. Join us in the fight for the new world; join us in the march toward Socialism, toward peace, toward the united creative effort of all those who toil with hand or brain.

The political platform and Program of Action for America adopted at the Second World Plenum are our guides for the immediate future; they must be realized in life.

FRED ELLIS, MICHAEL GOLD, WILLIAM GROPPER,
JOSHUA KUNITZ, A. B. MAGIL, HARRY ALAN POTAMKIN.

LAYOFF: Ford Factory

By ROBERT CRUDEN

For days the rumored layoff had hung heavily on us, a pall of gloom. What little talking we had done, we stopped. We cut out the few extra steps we took when we went to get stock. We worked feverishly and silently at our machines, working furiously in a flash of hands and steel, sending up production—12 pans, 13, 13½ pans. 13½ pans of push rods—6,075 a day, 760 an hour, 13 a minute. And on we worked like this, night after night, rushing ourselves out of jobs, our hands and levers falling and rising in a phantasmagoria of speed, speeding ourselves out of jobs, night after night.

The night when the layoff began started quietly enough. True, the street cars had been filled with morose, work-worn men whose grunting monosyllables were all about the layoff—but we young

ones had become accustomed to that after a week of it. Indeed, some of us dared to hope that the rumor was just a rumor, nothing more.

The men coming off the afternoon shift had nothing to say. That was good. As usual, we worked furiously until lunch-time at 3:30 a.m. Then for fifteen minutes we gobbled bread and swallowed milk and congratulated ourselves that, "Nuthin' doin' to-night." The steady stamp, cling, clang of a hundred presses to the back of us accompanied, "No layoff, no layoff."

About four-thirty, when all of us were working in a semi-conscious daze, three bosses appeared. Shouting arose. A worker, waiting for stock, had been fired. His pleadings and explanations only angered them. Fifty feet off, amid the roar and crash of presses and machines, we could hear them, "Get your time, get your time."

They passed us up. We were working at a mad rage, our eyes glued on our machines, our feet rooted in a square foot of ground, our bodies flexing in furious rhythm as hands and levers rose and fell in a crazy dance of speed. Up went production, 13½—14 pans. Would it never stop?

Dawn was breaking when our own boss came up. He passed directly to the old man who was inspecting the stock from our machines.

With a pounding heart I turned to watch. The boss was speaking to the man in a hangdog manner, his eyes on the ground and his feet shifting nervously. As the worker listened he did not move. His lips trembled, but he did not speak. His eyes hardly observable under the steel spattered glasses he wore, were glazed and dilated. His hands jerked and fumbled at the gauge. His body seemed to me to suddenly bend under a nameless, terrible burden. The boss spat tobacco juice out of his mouth, clapped the man on the shoulder and strode off.

For a few moments the old, gray-haired worker leaned up against his work table, piled high with small glistening push-rods. He looked at them, wiped off his hands clumsily with a dirty rag, and then hobbled off to the coat rack. I did not see him ring out. I was too busy making up my lost production.

By a quarter after eight we were out waiting for street cars. The tension which broods always over the midnight shift was intensified that morning. We stood around smoking, some snarling in impotent anger, most of us just standing, staring in a heavy lifeless way at the morning sky, lunch boxes hanging empty from arms which labor had killed in the night.

My brain was a ball of fire, running wild. I did not think. The layoff had begun. The idea came rushing through my head, rending my weary brain in agony. I wanted to shriek, to shake my fists at that monstrous killer, to howl to the world to stop it from devouring me. But a street car came. We ran, hitting and

kicking in an animal rush for seats.

Home. Too hungry to sleep, too tired to eat. I passed food mechanically from plate to mouth as I passed steel rods from pan to machine. Questions, words, gossip burst in on me from another world in which there were no steel devouring machines, no mad rushes for street car seats. In surly mumbles I answered, hoping against hope that the chatter would cease. But like the machines, it was deathless, running on forever—words, words, words.

It was two o'clock when I woke up. Although the shades were drawn I saw that summer sun was high in the afternoon sky. It would be so warm, so free, to be out in the sun—the thought crawled through my brain—and LAYOFF. With all the impact of a fly-wheel set loose the idea crashed into my consciousness. For some moments I was awake, my eyes wide and fearful. But then I was asleep again, sunk in the sodden sleep of the workers on the midnight shift.

When I woke up again it was half-past seven. Nine and a half hours' sleep! I felt pleased. Usually I was fortunate if I snatched but a few hours' rest—radios, children, salesmen, neighbors fighting, provided too much competition. I smiled at the thought—and LAYOFF. With the relentless bore of a drill press it cut into me. Thought went long ago—all that I could feel in my head, in my body, was a dark void. . . .

The cars were death houses that night. Hope was being killed in every man who rode them. No one slept. Few of us spoke. But though silent, apart, one single word united us—LAYOFF. It kept pounding through our heads, pounding with the monotonous, flattening regularity of a punch-press. The cars rolled through the night. We sat and stared in agony, knowing not who would go next. . . .

Men were coming away from the time clocks. We did not need to see the slips of paper clutched in their gnarled hands. Feeling, hope, emotion had ebbed from them. With faces white and drawn they marched in stolid step to the timekeeper. The big guns had gone into action. These were among the first victims.

In our section of the plant, the snipers picked us off. The wholesale layoff had not yet affected our gang, but individuals were being fired on the slightest pretext. And so, hidden behind machines, planted in the toilet galleries, dashing to and from from gang to gang, the snipers picked us off. A man stopped to clean acid from his shoe—a service man got his number. A grinder stood aside to wait for stock—a superintendent got him. All night long we furnished prey for nervous bosses and shifty-eyed service men. The layoff was in full swing.

When we went out in the morning there was a long line of men drawn up before the pay-office. Like stricken beasts, they stood in dumb pain, their eyes glazed over with hopelessness. I shivered. I too would soon be standing in that long line of silent, hopeless men.

TO MY VALENTINE—

1. From a cop to the speakeasy owner



I. Klein

Speakeasily, dear citizen,
The copper has a proper yen
For legs that fill elected boots,—
Our hearts shall beat in sweet cohoos.

2. From the speakeasy owner to the judge



Otto Soglow

My sense of license circumvents the law,
I dispense, spare no expense, to grease the itching paw.
'Tis well I know that otherwise your eyes I cannot budge
From traffic mine of beer and wine, my valentine, O judge!

3. From the judge to the corporation heads



Walter Quirt

As judge of the court I'm a very good sort
To the sort who are good to me.
I send, in my hat, a red herring fat
With the oil of conspiracy.

4. From the corporation heads to their master



Phil Bard

We're the cos. and the corps. and the limiteds
Who confess to a fervor fanatic;
Incorporate souls who love Auntie Reds
With a passion Morganatic.

Jingles by Harry L. Potamkin

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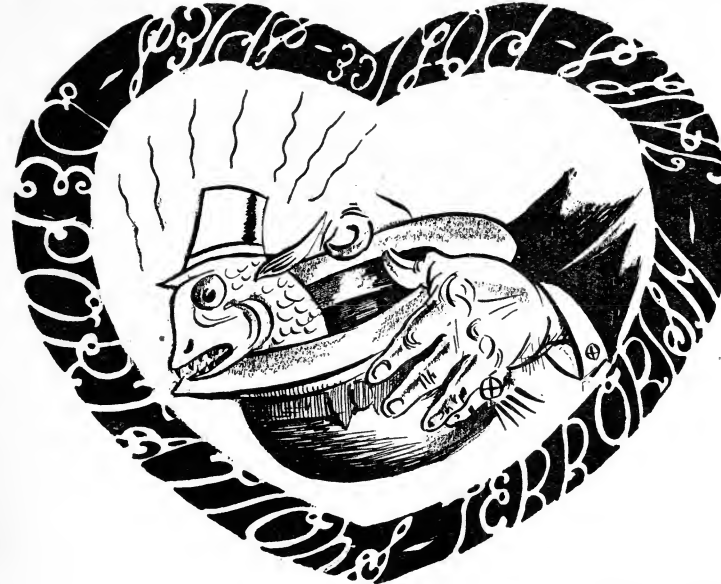
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AGNES SMEDLEY

THRU DARKNESS IN CHINA

The past two years in China have witnessed a decided and rapid swing to the Left of the young Chinese intellectual world. Following the establishment of the Nanking Government three years ago, with the terrible slaughters that accompanied and followed it, those revolutionary elements that remained alive, but chiefly the intellectual elements, either drew back in fear or indecision, or waited, hoping Nanking might do some good to the country. But the wars of the rival generals within and without the Government continued, the vicious suppression of the peasants and workers continued unabated, and the masses of the country were loaded with ever new taxes and burdens to fill the pockets of the generals and finance their wars. Slowly the disrupted intellectual world began to coalesce. To the right went the Fascist intellectuals into the Kuomintang, or in cooperation with it. And those who had revolutionary tendencies, vacillating up to that time, went to the Left, at first critically and protesting, then bitterly, and then into organized action. The last year has witnessed a swift swing to the Left behind the Communist peasant armies. The fight of the peasant armies has been like an electric current through revolutionary intellectual China. New social theatres have sprung up, Left writers began to confer, Left artists turned more to the new art of Soviet Russia and Germany, and literally dozens of volumes of new literature, chiefly Russian translations, tumbled from the press, and even conservative publishing houses found the sale so profitable that they published them, counting on quick returns sufficient to cover all expenses and bring in a good profit in case of suppression.

In the Spring and Summer of 1930, all this Left world began to coalesce into a united front. First came the organization of the All China Social Scientists' League, with headquarters in Shanghai and branches in various parts of the country and Japan. Here were organized professors, writers, and teachers. They issued a manifesto in which they declared it to be their purpose to spread Marxian science and to participate actively in the social revolution. During the Summer other cultural organizations were formed. Most interesting of these was the League of Left-Wing Writers of China, one of whose active members was China's most noted short-story writer, Lo Hsun. Formerly vacillating, and critical of the social revolutionary writers, Lo Hsun now joined the social revolutionaries "bag and baggage" as one hostile critic expressed it. And when Lo Hsun went, he took with him a huge following of sympathizers, for the students and intellectuals of the young and middle generations have been nurtured on his writings.

Close on the heels of these new organizations came the League of Left Dramatic Societies. There are some fourteen small theatrical clubs, groups and theatres in Shanghai, of which three can be called theatres. Chief of these theatres was the Shanghai Art Theatre and the Nan Ko Theatre, the latter five years old, the former appearing January, 1930. Formerly the Nan Ko was dominated by Bohemianism and an "art for art's sake" attitude, but after all, even as an artistic group, it found the present society and forms utterly empty, uncreative, stupefying. So it went to the Left with giant strides and those of its members who doubted were brushed aside. Tien Han, its head, led the advance. The Shanghai Art Theatre had presented a number of dramas—Remarque's *All Quiet on the Western Front*, Sinclair's *Second Story Man*, Romain Rolland's *Game of Love and Death* and Maerden's *Coal Strike*, and was preparing for the Russian drama, *Roar China*, when the heavy hand of the law fell upon its shoulder. The Shanghai Art Theatre leads, and always led, to the Left.

Then, as if not to be left behind, came the formation of the League of Left Artists and all those who could push a brush—to the Left—joined. Close upon its heels came the Union of New Book Shops—which is a peculiarly interesting development in China, because of the dozens of new book shops that publish or circulate—well, we will call it the "new literature."

In September came the organization of the Federation of Left Cultural Associations of China, composed of the above—social scientists, writers, artists, theatres, book-shops; and thereto the

League for Freedom, founded by intellectuals months before to propagate freedom of the press, speech, organization and the strike; also the League against Imperialism, and the International Red Aid. The Federation was headed by a committee of elected delegates from all branches, it imposed rigid discipline upon its members, and began intense activity amongst doubtful intellectuals. Its various organizations carried on work in their own field. The Social Scientists' League, for instance, had already a record of great activity. It has branches in many universities, its Tokyo branch started with 40 members and has for months published an excellent monthly magazine, *The Struggle*. The League in Shanghai published a number of magazines: *The New Thought*; *Lectures on Social Science* (much like the German monthly, *Under the Banner of Marxism*); the *International Magazine* (an anti-imperialist monthly); the *Social Science Front*, their chief journal. *New Thought* carried on for seven issues before it was suppressed. It openly published the foundation names of the members of the League and informed the Kuomintang in direct words that it was out to fight it to the death, and likewise to support the Chinese Soviets to the death. *Lectures on Social Science*, however, appeared but once before it was suppressed, as did the *International Magazine*. The latter magazine did not have a line in it about China, but only articles on imperialist exploitation in colonial countries—still the Kuomintang didn't like its contents.

The League of Social Scientists also began to carry out an extensive program of publishing small text-books for mass education in Soviet districts as well as in other parts of China. These covered such subjects as: the history of the Chinese revolution; its present stage and tasks; the land problem; labor, youth, and woman problems; the peasants and the revolution; problems of proletarian dictatorship; the revolution and the Communist Party; Fascism; Leninism; Marxism; various economic, social, and political problems; imperialism in the colonies with studies of revolutionary struggles in the colonies; and every phase of the Soviet system in the Soviet Union.

The League of Left Wing Writers, also many months old, had begun an interesting and significant struggle. In the August 4th issue of its small weekly journal appeared a resolution of which the following is a part:

1. The present proletarian literary movement in China must fight for the existence of Chinese Soviet power . . . The problems confronting the League are: a) how to help raise the political, educational and cultural level of the masses; b) to aid the working class in a realization of its historical task; c) to unite revolutionary sentiment and historical development. 2. To create a workers and peasants correspondence; to create a reportage movement through schools, factories, and villages concerning the war between the White and Red troops.

The resolution also discussed the mistakes and weaknesses of the past, such as the lack of full development of the theoretical struggle in China; the lack of reality in the present school of writing; the literati belief in the "almightiness" of writing; the tendency to legalism; the remnants of individualism. It further announced its determination to unify writing and labour, making it compulsory upon all members to take active part in the social revolution and to create a literature only from reality.*

Of course the Kuomintang and the Nanking Government struck right and left. Like the Imperial Japanese Government, they try to crush all "dangerous thoughts," and the methods they have used and continue to adopt are a perfect copy of Japanese methods. All of the Left organizations and members felt the heavy hand of these generals and politicians. The Shanghai Art Theatre, whose productions sound mild indeed to Europeans, was suppressed and some of its members arrested. The most of them live in hiding. The Nan Ko Theatre was suppressed on the third night of its

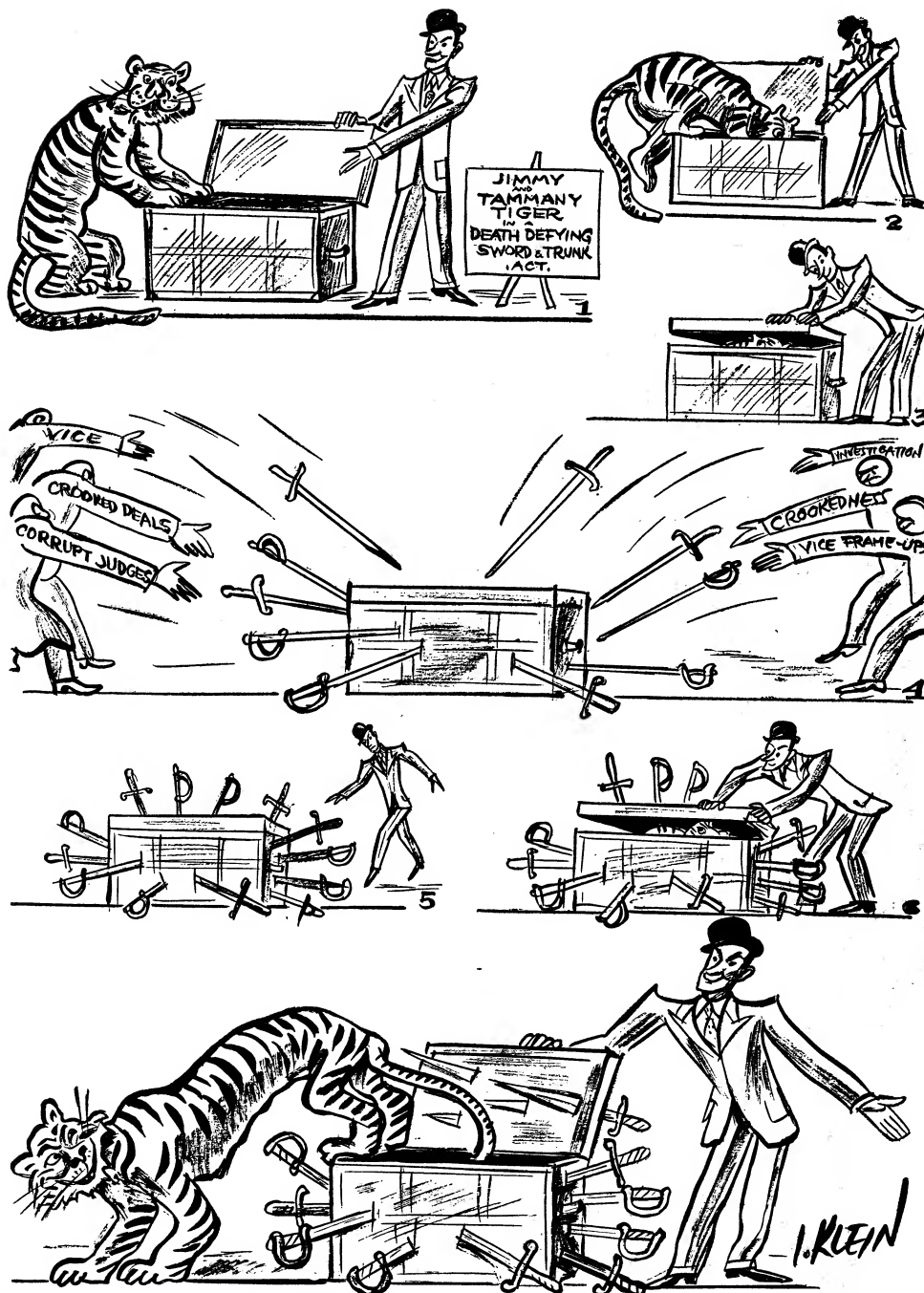
*The statement in full, addressed to American workers, artists and writers, together with photographs of Lo Hsun and the trial of Professor Hung Seng, were sent to New Masses by the League of Left-Wing Writers of China and appeared in our January number.—Editor.

production of *Carmen*. The room of its leader, Tien Han, was later raided, and he fled to Japan, where he now lives in exile. He is a brilliant, erratic genius, not unlike the pre-revolutionary Russians, and has written many one and two-act dramas of artistic and social significance.

Of course, the Left Wing Writers could never escape. *Moung Ya* (*Grass Sprouts*), that brilliant literary magazine of which Lo Hsun was the publisher, was suppressed. In its stead sprang up *The New Land* and *The Pioneer*, both of which went down under the combined charge of British and Kuomintang police. *The Partisan* and *The Masses* followed. That intensely interesting little weekly, *The Cultural Struggle*, which appeared from the beginning of the League's organization, is the only one now existing, but neither it nor any of the other Left magazines that formerly appeared in Shanghai can be sold in the book-shops, as formerly. Most of the Left Wing writers, including Lo Hsun himself, live in secret and some are in exile. It was of great interest that, despite the White Terror, a large gathering of these men and women met on September 17th in Shanghai to celebrate the fiftieth birthday of Lo Hsun, and that some of their members then announced that the Nanking government had issued a secret order for the arrest of some fifty Left writers, among them Lo Hsun.

The fight against "dangerous thoughts" was carried out all along the line. The college that had been founded in Shanghai by the Social Scientists' League was raided by the police and suppressed. In Peking, 60 students in the National University were arrested and imprisoned in October for trying to found a branch of the Social Scientists' League there. All publishing houses and bookshops in Shanghai and other cities have been ordered by the Kuomintang to sell no magazines or Left literature. And to counteract the new cultural societies, the Kuomintang proposes to start what it calls a "national book-shop" where "the tastes of youth will be ignored" and books and magazines of a "decent, respectable" nature will be offered the revolutionary youth of China! So, before long we may see a book-shop filled with volumes written by American bankers, bourgeois professors of economics, ex-presidents, and factory owners. A Chinese Kuomintang professor has also come to Shanghai to start a "new" theatre to prevent Communists from "corrupting the youth of Athens." This new theatre will be financed by the Shanghai Chinese Municipality which is headed by really bloated Generals.

The White terror rages in every field in China. And yet the revolutionary intellectuals do not draw back. It often seems that they, in common with the Chinese masses, have passed beyond death or fear of death. Their struggle is not the romantic fight that poets and writers in far-away countries like to imagine. We who sit relatively near to them can never know what is going on. But it is known to all who can read that men and women suspected of being or proved to be Communists are savagely tortured in every part of China these days and are then either shot or beheaded in the streets. When Communists are caught in Hankow or other cities, the generals and other Kuomintang gentlemen have adopted their final method to prevent their victims from shouting slogans as they go to their death. Formerly these prisoners walked to their death, shouting: "We die for the sake of Communism!" But now they don't. They can't because their tongues are first cut out, or their mouths are stuffed with dirty rags. With blood trickling from their mouths, and already half-dead from torture,



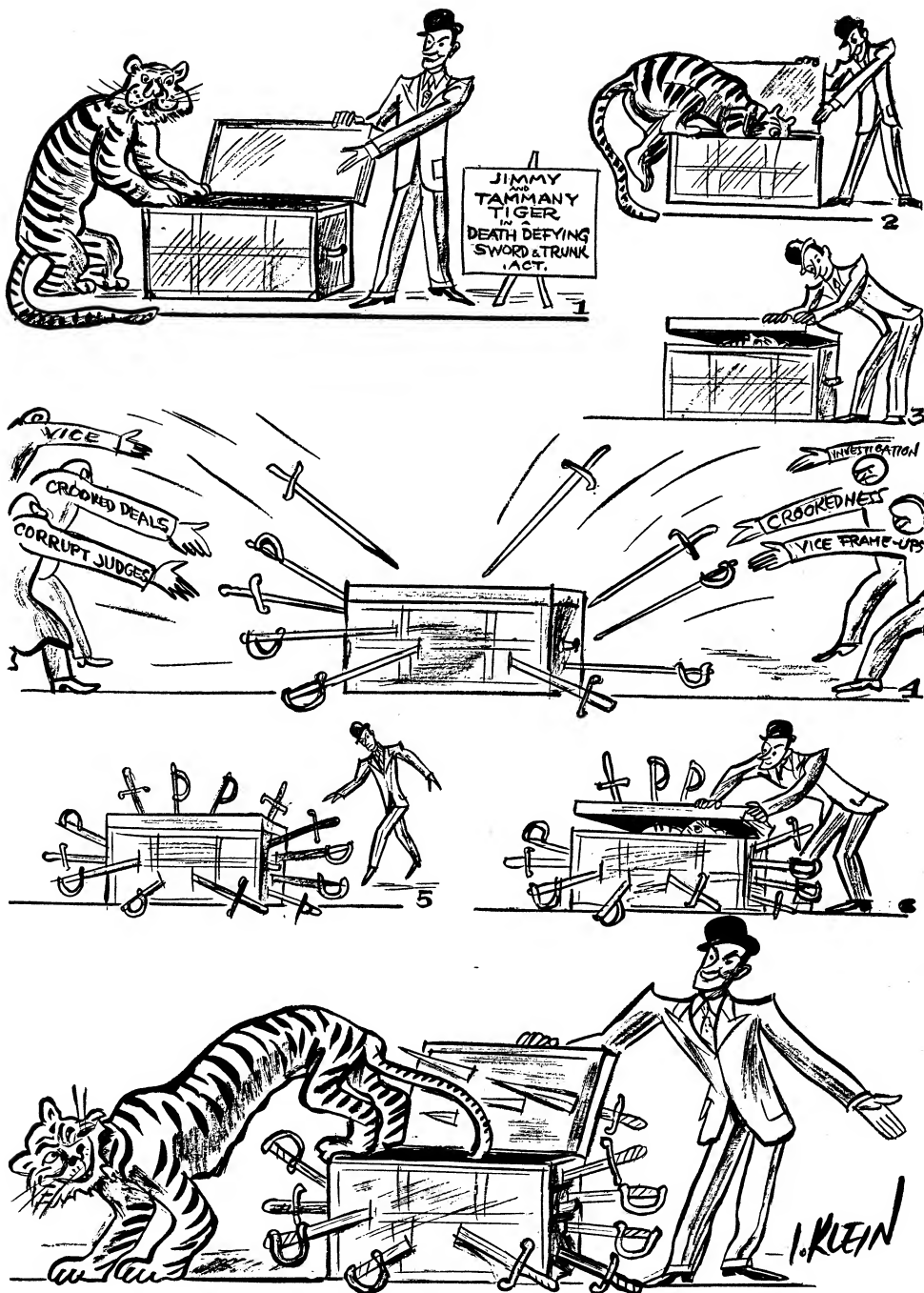
THE OLD ACT, STILL PLAYING (Watch Daily Press)

I. Klein

they are taken to their death. In Canton, a high official and banker said to me personally: "I don't know what it is, but there must be something attractive in Communism for our students. When we take them out to be shot, men or girls, they go without fear, shouting: 'We die for the sake of Communism! Listen everybody! We die for the sake of Communism!'"

There is no coming from prison, a hero and a martyr, for the revolutionary youth of China. Over the path pointing the way to the social revolution are the words: "Abandon hope, all ye who enter here!" Abandon hope—or does one? The revolutionary Russian workers have a proverb which they formerly often used: "Even if they burn the snow, there still remains for us the ashes." Only the ashes! And yet recall—is there not a story somewhere of a Phoenix arising time and again from dead ashes?

SHANGHAI, CHINA







GROPPER

THE HUNGER MARCH
William Gropper

CHARLES YALE HARRISON

DEATH OF A STRIKER*

That summer the prices of food went higher and higher. Demands for more wages were denied by the shipping employers. Groups of angry men gathered at the gates after work; talked in low resentful tones of the low wages, of hard times, of what their women would say.

Meetings were called. Speeches were made. Committees were appointed. Votes were taken.

Red Hook seethed with excitement. Strike talk was in the air. Little boys, sons of the dockworkers, chalked insulting slogans on the gates leading to the docks.

At the union headquarters, Doyle perspired and explained to his men that no strike vote could be taken without the consent of the international executive committee. Work was not as plentiful as it was during the war days.

There were days when there was no work at all. Sixty-five cents an hour came to very little what with days of idleness. Bread, butter, milk, meat prices moved higher and higher. On Friday, in some strange manner, the week's wages were gone.

At union headquarters newspaper reporters appeared:

"What's new?" "Will your union go on strike, Mr. Doyle?"

Doyle passed an agitated hand over his forehead, licked his lips and spoke for publication.

"Now yuh can say dat Michael Doyle, business manager of de International Longshoremen's Union, local 34, last night said dat he is willin' to do business wit' de employers. He is against rough stuff of any sort. My men knows I'm O. K. I wanna avoid trouble along de docks. If the bosses'll meet us half-way—we'll do de rest. . . ."

"The olive branch of industrial peace was extended last night in the longshoremen's impending strike, when Michael Doyle, business manager of the International Longshoremen's Union, local 34, offered to negotiate an agreement with ship owners without resorting to a stoppage of work."

"Mr. Doyle told reporters that he would do everything in his power to avert a strike. He said:

"I am perfectly willing to negotiate with the employers. I am unalterably opposed to violence of any sort. The sane thing to do at this time is for all interested parties to sit down calmly at a round table and discuss the questions which agitate not only the employers and longshoremen but the public at large. . . ."

The president of the International Longshoremen's Union was a member of the wartime National Adjustment Commission. When the commission rejected the workers' demands of one dollar an hour and offered seventy cents as a compromise, the president decided to abide by the decision, not without an effort however, he said, to present the plight of his men. He stood up at the commission meeting and said:

"Gentlemen . . ."

It pleased him to be able to stand here in this well appointed room and look down at the morose faces of the committee, a banker, a millionaire manufacturer and a nationally-known dollar-a-year man; and say to them, as an equal might say, "gentlemen . . ."

"Gentlemen, I shall, of course abide by the decision of the Commission, of which I am proud and honored to be a member. I feel, as I have said before . . ."

He looked at the solemn upturned faces of his fellow-members, he watched with pleasure the pencils of the reporters jotting down notes. . . . "—that seventy cents an hour is somewhat insufficient—"

Notes jotted down again and then a pause of pencils, a pause for the president of the International Union —

"But I assure you that I shall do all in my power to induce my men to accept the award of this commission. I shall ask my men to remain at work."

Pencils raced across copy-paper.

"Industrial peace, as I have stated on previous occasions, can only be maintained. . . ."

When Doyle's local met to hear the report of the president the men were restless. Strange faces appeared among the rank and file; sinister gangster faces.

Doyle sat, red and excited, on the platform. On his right was the president, wing collar and bushy hair, his hands folded in his lap.

It was with deep regret that the president had to announce that the award of the commission was not up to the expectation of the membership, but in these days half a loaf was better than none. It would be extremely unwise to listen to the advice of hot-heads to go on strike. It is an easy matter to go on strike. All you had to do was to stop work and you were on strike. But it takes leadership to obtain some measure of success and keep men on the job. That was the trick. Five cents an hour was an increase of two dollars and forty cents a week. That means more than a hundred dollars a year extra.

Other speakers arose. Labor leaders. "Look at our union, peaceful negotiations done the trick."

Speech after speech. The men listened silently, their bronzed faces immobile under the torrent of words. A young longshoreman got to his feet after the speeches:

"Brother president and Brother Doyle I wanna say that for me and some of the brothers that we can't accept the terms that the commission lays down for us. If you took a vote. . . ."

Some of the strangers in the hall moved toward the speaker.

"Throw 'im out!"

Instantly the room was in an uproar. Men leaped to their feet.

One man stood on his chair and shook his fist in the face of the president and shouted:

"Get yer God-damned stool-pigeons outta here."

Shouts calling for a vote on the report were heard.

The president walked to the edge of the platform and held up his hand for silence. He spoke of radicals and warned of ill-considered action. One of the strangers shouted "adjourn."

Doyle smashed his gavel on the table, and shouted:

"Brothers th' meetin' is adjointed."

When the men crowded out of the hall into the street a brawl had started. One of the longshoremen, a giant Swede, had called Doyle and the president bastards; one of the Doyle adherents had reached into the high hip-pocket and swung a leather-encased blackjack at the head of the Swede.

Knees collapsed and the bulky body slid along the wall against which it was leaning and fell to the pavement. The face, red and tanned a moment ago, was now green under the yellow street-lamp.

Hoarse voices called to one another. The sound of heavy boots striking the pavements sounded and mingled with the shouts. The awkward figure of the Swede lying limp near the wall of the meeting-hall had crystallized the loose feeling of injustice and betrayal.

Sides were quickly drawn. The Doyle men and the strangers in the black derby-hats edged along the wall leading to the corner. A ring of hulking longshoremen circled the retreating men.

Lonely, mournful police whistles called and were answered. Angry hands reached for the throats, shoulders of the union gangsters. Boots lashed out at shrinking loins.

A woman shrieked across the street. The attackers withdrew. The police whistles sounded nearer. The shadowy group of longshoremen dispersed, vanished around corners, up alleys.

When the police arrived the Swede was still lying near the entrance of the hall; near him one of the men in the derby-hats was bent over hugging his groin.

The next day the insurgents in Doyle's union rented a room over a saloon as headquarters. New committees were formed. Edward Roberts joined the new union.

Leaflets were printed. The next night a mass meeting was held.

*From the novel *A Child Is Born* to be published March 9, by Jonathan Cape & Harrison Smith. A previous installment appeared in the July, 1930 issue of *New Masses*.

Red Hook came to life after the idle listlessness of the summer. Women in the hallways talked of the new union. Stories of the impending strike filled the newspapers. Doyle issued statements to the press deploring the strike talk. Squads of police appeared at the dock-gates in the morning as the men went to work. Mounted police clattered on the cobble-stones along the streets leading to the waterfront.

A young Irishman appeared out of nowhere to lead the strike. He sat with the committee and drew up a list of demands, he organized picketing groups, issued statements to the press.

Doyle warned through the papers that the new union was outlawed by the International, that its leaders were radicals, that the young Irishman had been a pacifist during the war, that the International Union would abide by the award of the adjustment commission: half a loaf was better than none.

The morning that the longshoremen went on strike it rained. At dawn gray figures of pickets appeared near the dock-gates. Men going to work were stopped; groups argued with the strike-breakers.

Simple arguments. The price of food. "Takin' the bread outta the mouths of our wives and kids." "Join with us, brother, and it'll be over in a week."

Sometimes the answer was a sheepish grin, sometimes an incoherent answer: "I got a wife and kids too." An angry movement of the shoulders and the strikebreakers strode towards the gates. Wives of the strikers appeared on following mornings. They wore shawls over their heads to protect them from the drizzling October rains.

For the first time in his life Edward Roberts found an interest apart from his wife Margaret, the children and the corner saloon. He was a member of the picketing committee. Early in the morning he took his group of men down to the docks. He was animated now. It was not important now, it seemed to him, where money came from.

Margaret got some supplies from the strikers' relief station. The landlord was put off from week to week. The corner groceryman was wheedled into giving a few dollars worth of credit.

Blumgarten, the insurance agent, called on the Roberts' at night after his regular daily collections. His debit-route included nearly all the longshoremen's families in the district. Bit by bit his collection fell off. Each policy which lapsed meant loss of earnings and the strike was as real to him as it was to the most haggard housewife.

The night that the strike vote was taken he called on Margaret to warn her of the danger of letting her insurance payments fall too far in arrears. His face was pasty and his simulated forceful eloquence sounded hollow.

"Mis' Roberts, now, ve been doin' business for more'n ten years, hevn't ve? Lemme varn you dot now it would be de voist t'ing for you to leppe de insurance."

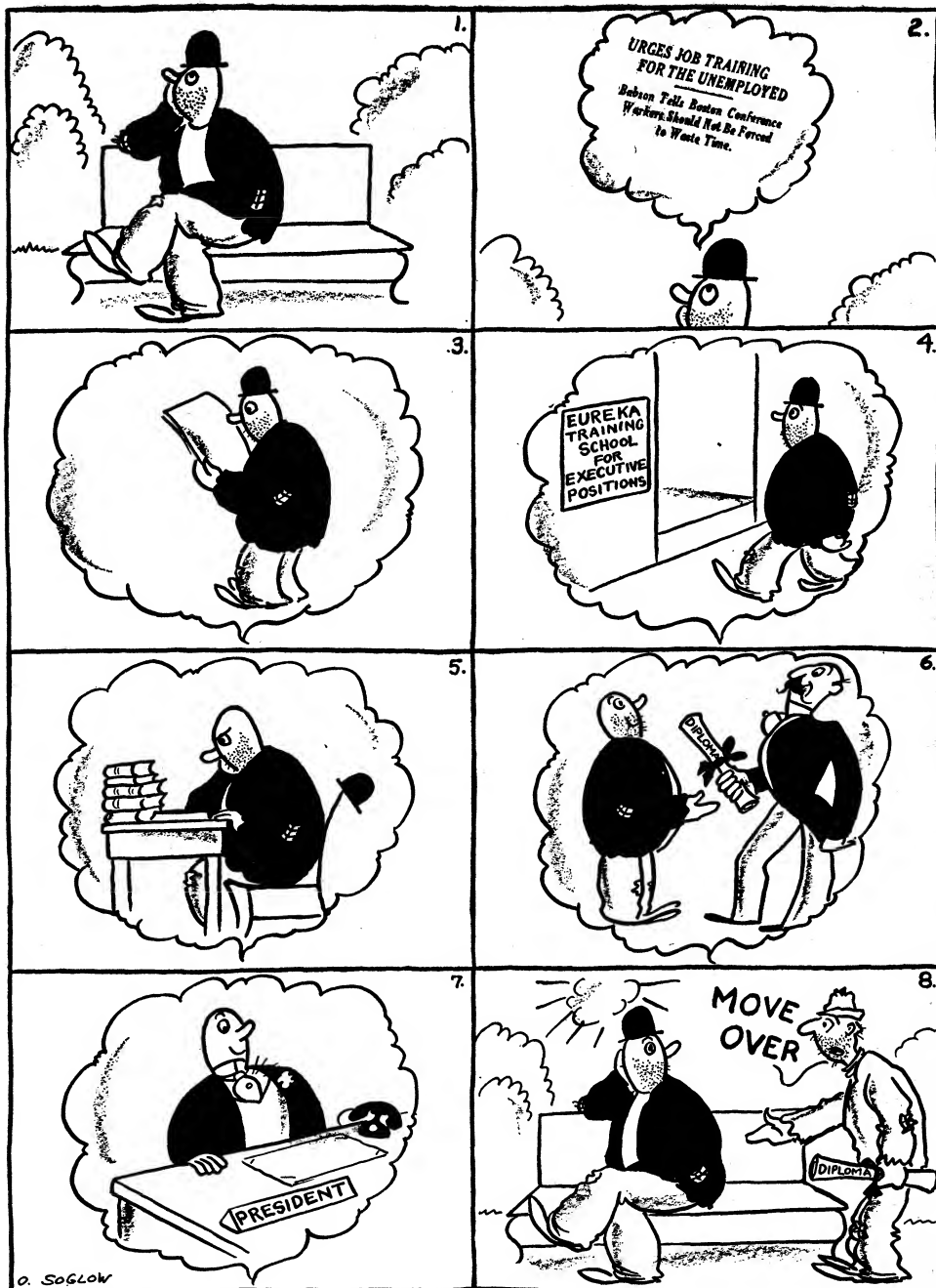
"I know Mr. Blumgarten," Margaret said, "but what can I do? The strike. . . ."

"Yes, it's just in a time like dis ven you nid it."

Margaret was silent.

The agent was tired, all day long he had been saying the same things, giving the same warnings, talking of protection and the hour of need and the inevitable certainty of death—words meaning basic, fundamental things—the bitter reality of life; death, children—but now the words were things to be spat out in stuffy kitchens.

Somewhere in Manhattan, in mahogany offices, glib executives had coined these phrases for him; they had written speeches for him, speeches containing vital words—children, life, death, happiness—but now as he sat in Margaret's kitchen a listlessness



Otto Soglow

NEWS ITEM: Babson says it is foolish to look for jobs now—there are none. He advises workers to utilize their spare time to prepare themselves for something better.

overcame him and the words seemed as though they were dropping without motive or force from the corner of his mouth.

"God forbid, Mis' Roberts, it shouldn't heppen to my voist frend, but supposin'—de strike, gangsters—und God forbid, your husband got killed—so vat?"

Margaret looked at him with silent, frightened eyes. Arthur stood by his mother and listened to the strange words—life, death, happiness, children—but not understanding. Men came into this kitchen and spoke important words to his mother, important words which made her look sad.

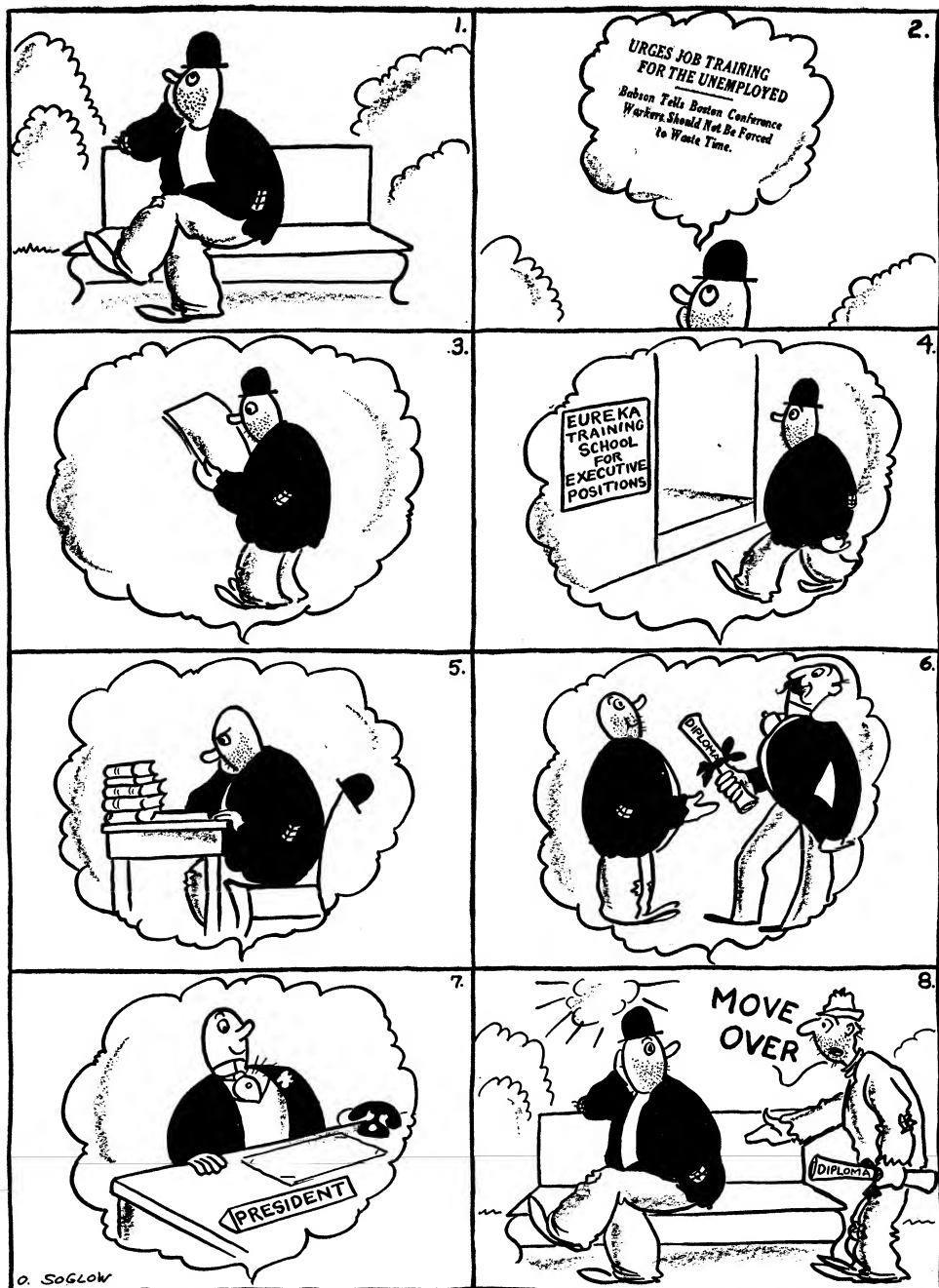
Blumgarten sighed.

"Vell, vot more ken I say? I'm tired too, Mis' Roberts, all day on my feet. Vun more veek und your insurance is gone, after all dese years. . . ."

A misty October morning.

It is a little past dawn. The yellow mist smears the Red Hook waterfront blurring dock-gates, scurrying figures and the looming outlines of ships, all distorted in the gray light.

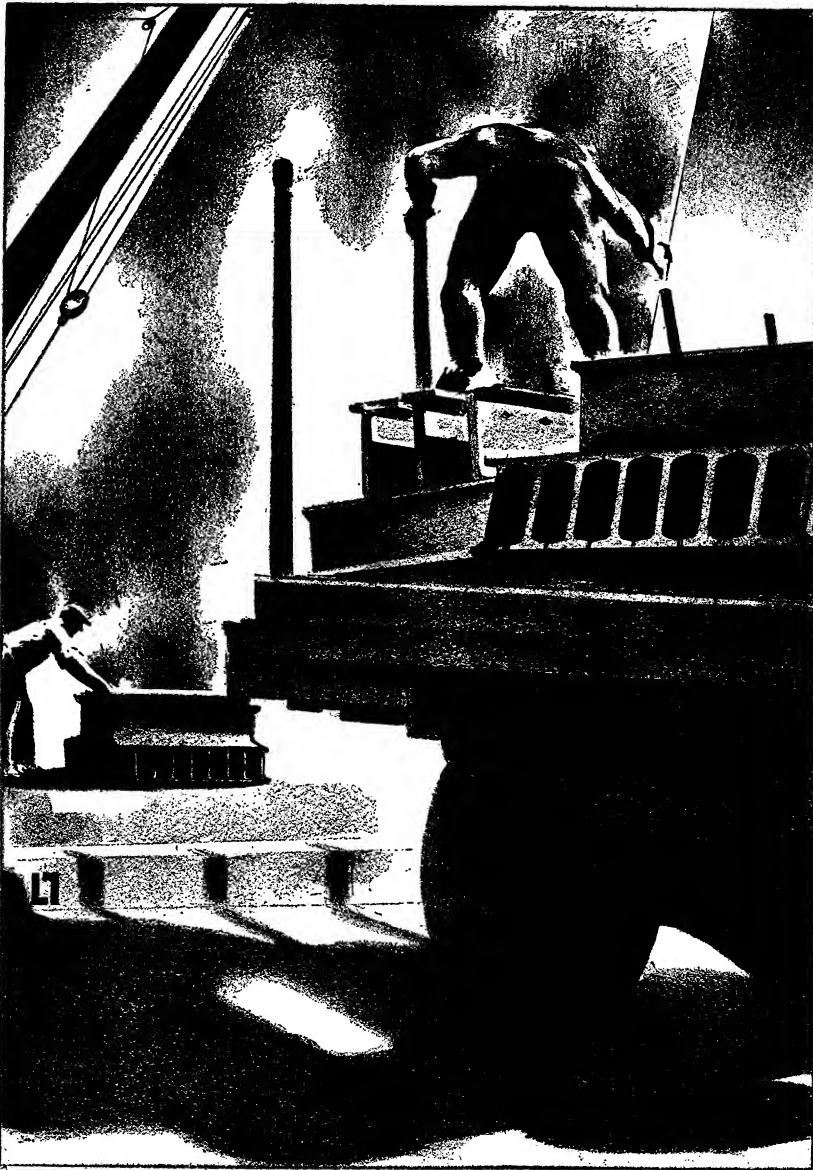
Out of the side streets leading to the docks, figures emerge, one by one. Groups form. More picketers arrive and shuffle off



Otto Soglow

nearly all the long-
bit his collection fell
of earnings and the
t haggard housewife

NEWS ITEM: Babson says it is foolish to look for jobs now—there are none. He advises workers to utilize their spare time to prepare themselves for something better.



UNLOADING

Louis Lozowick

into the mist. Soon the mist is studded with loosely outlined figures.

Last night in the insurgents' hall a mass picketing demonstration was decided upon. Wives of the strikers pledged to take part. Exultant voices offered services, faces were red and flushed with excitement, but now there were no shouts and no excitement—only scurrying figures in the mist.

The empty clatter of hoof-beats sound along the street. Mounted police canter out of side streets, take up positions near the dock-gates.

More figures emerge from the side streets. Policemen on foot in twos and threes saunter up to their positions and station themselves near the gates.

The sun struggles hopelessly to break through the gloom and mist.

Imperceptibly the street running parallel to the docks takes on the appearance of a battle-field before dawn.

Silent group facing silent group.

From the window of a house looking down on the waiting figures the wailing cry of a child is heard.

A lonely man here and there hurries into the open gates. Here and there a picket disengages himself from his group and accosts the strikebreaker. The police stand at the gates and watch silently.

Seven o'clock.

Suddenly groups of strikebreakers come out of the side streets. They are indistinguishable from the picketers. The same uncouth

work-clothes. The same splotchy walk. They are escorted by private detectives.

Edward Roberts stands in the doorway with a group of five pickets. He and his men eye the strikebreakers resentfully. They talk:

"Look at those bastards . . . takin' the bread outta our mouths. . . ."

"Scabs . . ." The word is spat out with hatred.

"Yuh know de story of de scab wot walked up to a snake one morning and de snake said, 'Hello, shorty'. . . ."

"Christ, if they'se anythin' worse than a scab . . . I dunno. . . ."

"Lookit 'em, lookit 'em. . . ."

"Wait a minute, there goes another bunch now. . . ."

They watch another group of pickets approach the strikebreakers.

The strikebreakers, hesitate, halt awkwardly. Other pickets approach. A few policemen start toward the group which is now halted in the center of the street.

Suddenly from the side streets, strikers, women and children run towards the haggling group of pickets and strikebreakers. Men in blue overalls, women in shawls, little boys in torn trousers, girls in faded gingham dresses.

It is raining hard now and the clothes of the runners stick to their bodies outlining arms, legs, breasts.

A police club is raised. A clenched fist is seen for a second above the heads of the milling crowd.

Soprano police whistles call and are answered.

The battling group breaks up. The strikers, disorganized, withdraw to the side of the street facing the docks. A brick is thrown. Then more. The area between the police and the strikers is not cleared yet. Stragglers run for cover. Groups of police are merged, waiting for the signal for action. A few women and children run for safety into the side streets.

A volley of stones land near the police.

Suddenly shots are fired. The crowd facing the police is silent for a moment. No one is hurt.

A group of strikebreakers, late arrivals, are hustled by detectives through one of the gates leading to the docks. The strikers yell resentful epithets at them.

"Yah, scabs."

"Come back, you yellow bastards."

There is sudden threatening movement from a group of pickets and sympathizers. The crowd moves towards the pickets. It runs, gains momentum.

A little woman with bedraggled skirts and her shawl glistening with rain leads the crowd. She is well to the fore. She waves her arms. She is shouting something. What she says cannot be heard for the shouts of her followers.

She reaches the center of the street. There is an encouraging cry from the strikers. She is making for a group of strikebreakers being escorted to the dock-gate.

At once a few shots are fired from where the police stand. The little woman falls. The crowd hesitates and runs for the openings of the side streets.

She rolls on the cobble-stones and clasps her hands to the base of the skull. Her legs kick high in the air, revealing thin, straight shanks in banded, colored stockings and a red petticoat, the sort of underthings which bring roars of laughter from the burlesque-theatre audiences.

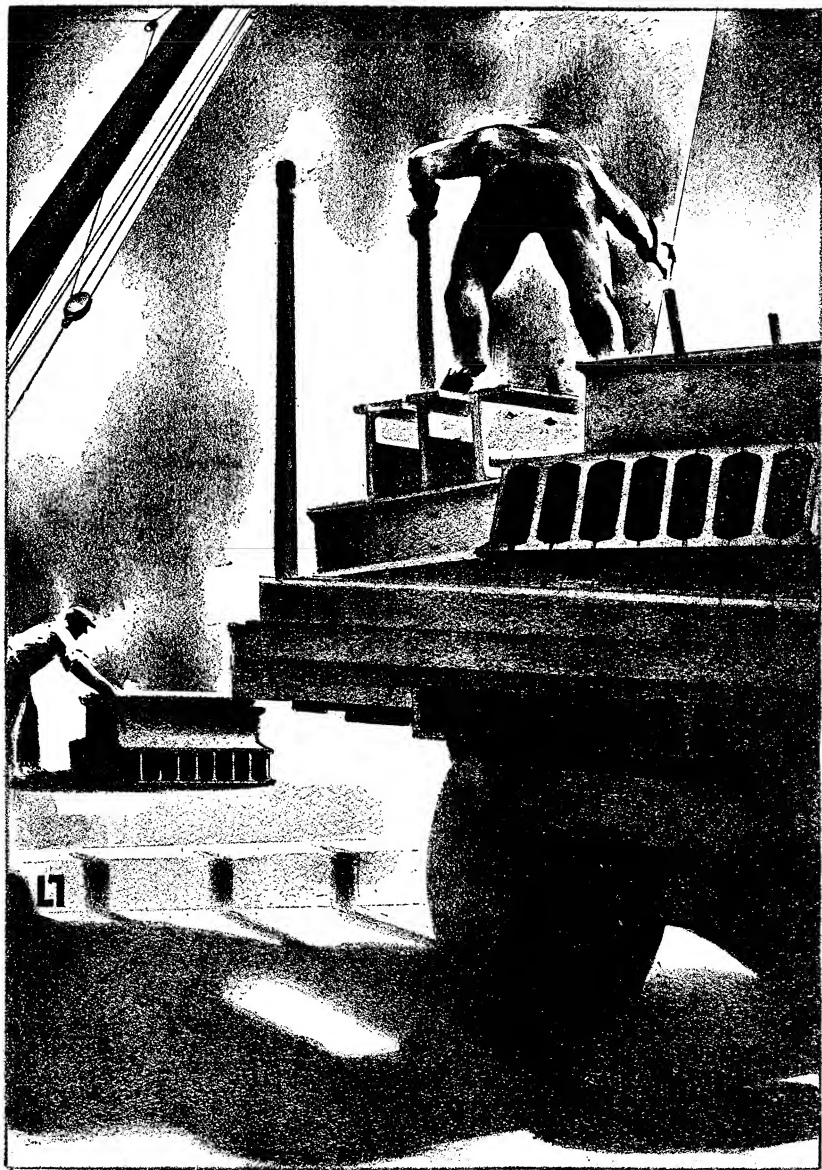
Edward Roberts stood in the doorway and watched the woman rolling in the street. When she fell he said to himself, half aloud:

"Christ—there goes Mrs. Schmerer."

He remembered the night that Arthur, his son was born and how he came home feeling good and how she had said, "Sh, Margaret iss sleeping," and now she was rolling on the hard stones out there with her hands to the base of her skull like something hurt her.

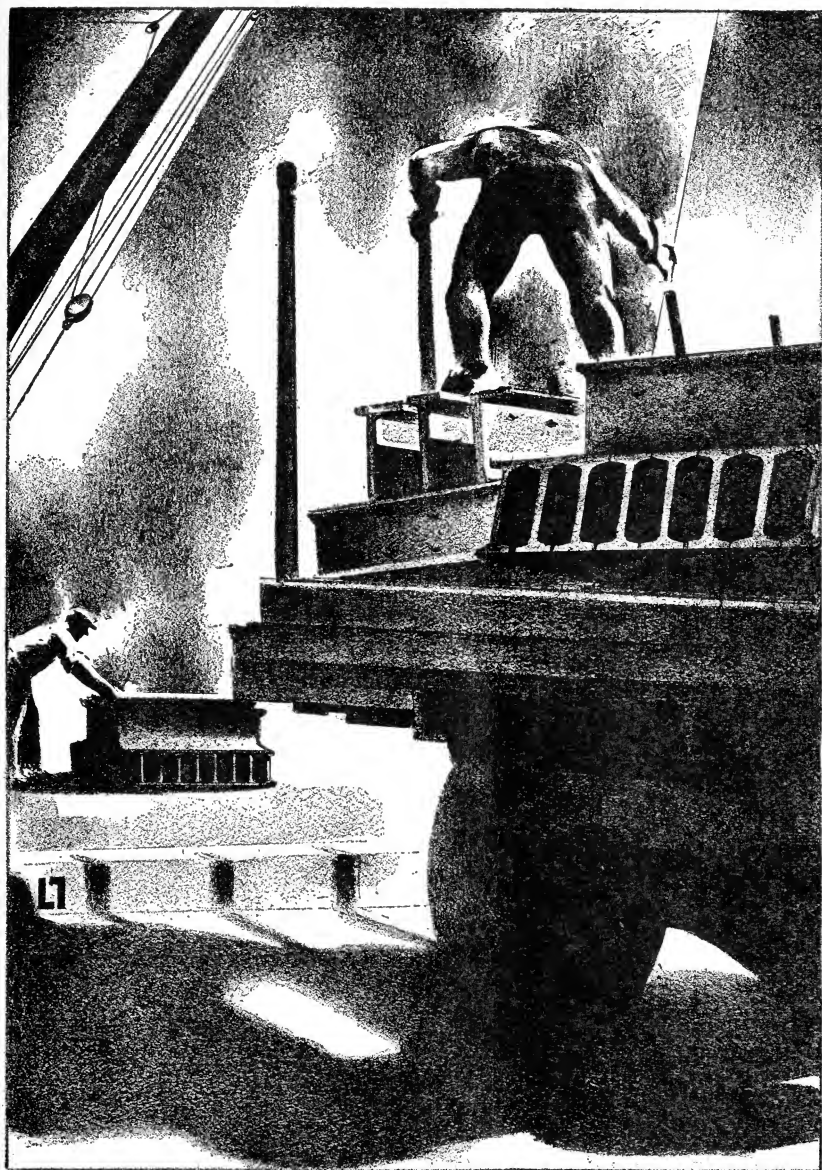
The scene suddenly became immobile for him. Everything stood still, frozen.

The street with men and women running motionless like in the pictures in the newspapers. The police in their blue uniforms, brass buttons and silver shields. The horses, one of them rearing up on his hind legs, his flanks shining in the morning rain. And



UNLOADING

LOUIS LOZOWICK '30
Louis Lozowick



UNLOADING

LOUIS LOZOWICK '30

Louis Lozowick

Mrs. Schmerer lying there. Everything was still.

Suddenly Mrs. Schmerer moved. She moved and rolled over on her side still holding the base of her skull.

There were no shots now; only Mrs. Schmerer lying there.

Edward Roberts moved out of the protection of the doorway.

He walked slowly to where the woman was lying; she was quite still now. He walked slowly with his eyes fixed on the gray huddled-up woman lying on the cobble-stones.

He kept thinking that he would have to pick her up and get her out of the way of the horses' hoofs.

He heard voices calling to him from the crowds of strikers which hesitated in the openings of the side streets.

Edward walked steadily on.

He saw the mounted police at the other side of the wide street. Suddenly he looked down and there was Mrs. Schmerer.

Her face was bloodless, green. It was turned in the direction of the docks and it had no expression. Her shawl was pushed back and her long strands of colorless hair blended with the gray of the cobble-stones. A thread-like vein at her temple throbbed a little, he could see that. He must get her away from here.

He walked around the unconscious woman so that he could pick her up in his arms and carry her away, back to where she lived.

Edward wondered in that moment where her husband might be. Maybe over there with those people. Maybe Schmerer had seen her fall. Maybe he didn't know it was his wife that fell.

Anyway, he would have to pick her up and carry her back to where she lived. He bent over to pick her up. . .

In that second he felt a heavy blow in his groin. A sickening sharp pain followed.

He staggered.

I mustn't fall on her, he said to himself. I'm heavy, I'll hurt her if I fall on her. God help me, I'm shot. He knew he was bleeding.

The police, the horses, the outlines of the smokestacks of the ships became indistinct, blurred. He felt nauseated.

I mustn't fall on her he said to himself.

Those who stood in the side streets saw Edward keel over and fall doubled-up near the prostrate woman.



William Siegel

"... but Holy Father, look what we have already done for the church!"

UNEMPLOYED

By HERMAN SPECTOR

After a morning of pounding the pavements in search of a job, answering Want-Ads for any kind of dirty, ill-paid work available, a guy feels that he's just about done-up, and is entitled to a rest. There's no point in plugging at it any longer: after eleven o'clock there's nothing doing. Some guys go straight from the joblines to the breadlines. But I had a few pennies left. So I headed for an automat, thinking to warm up with what I call a "coffee-minus", before spreading myself around in my various hangouts: the 42nd Street Library, free art galleries, penny arcades, etc.

It was too damn cold to walk around much. The wind was hitting it up with a vengeance; a thin, cruel glaze of sleet covered the streets. Pushing through a revolving door, I found myself in the warm, clean-looking restaurant: milkwhite tables glistening all around, people furtively or thoughtfully munching their food, the glint of nickel and neat, clever dishes spotlighted behind glass-ware like star performers in some vaudeville show. There's nothing that appeals more to the ordinary New Yorker, on weather like this, than an unpretentious, busy cafeteria. In the first place, it has a sort of tabloid look: bright, easy to understand, and optimistic. In the second place, it clicks, and that makes it authentic.

So I held the knob just a little longer than was necessary, and the last drop of coffee dribbled into my cup, and the guy behind me was ready to curse with impatience. Choosing a vacant table, I sat down and slapped my paper down beside me. Other people, I noticed, were sitting alone by preference, and silently regarded each other. Cynical lot of egotists, I thought. I sipped the coffee: it was delicious.

Through the plate-glass window I could see Sixth avenue, the pillars of the El, the cheerless plot of park beyond: bare now, rimmed with ice and snow. The good warm coffee inclined me to take a better view of life. Things are bound to change, eh? A guy can't go on existing like this forever. How long, now, have I been on the bum? Oh, pretty long, a pretty long time. Being battered around gets a fellow dizzy; his memory goes back on him. Or maybe—there is too much to remember. Well it does not matter: nothing matters, much. I drank the coffee slowly, not to lose any of the flavour.

The last night had been a tough one. I'd caught a little sleep on the trains. At 14th an accident had tied up the line for over

TWO POEMS by NORMAN MACLEOD

SONS OF SOIL

*Color of soil is on their faces now,
their knowledge the cool long curve of the loam
in productive bearing:
they are at home
with the tradition of life germinating
as men progress from the past into the future,
and their muscles can ripple
as their brains for social thought.*

SONG OF THE MASSES

*The bodies of machines are black,
dark as the reach of a race from Africa
but the future of communistic industry
is a sun to light the world,
and whether the skins of men be white
or black, the song of the masses
in the gloom is a ruddy glow.*



William Siegel

"... but Holy Father, look what we have already done for the church!"



William Siegel

"... but Holy Father, look what we have already done for the church!"



"C'mon, Get Goin'!"

an hour. A guy had knelt down on the platform as the train pulled in, and flung himself over. A sudden shower of sparks, the engineer's quick fearsome *Toot!* as the train grinded to a full stop in the center of the platform, and it was all over—for him. It was messy. Parts of him were found as far back as the third car. The pavement below had received a fresh, steaming gift of his intestines. In the morning paper I noticed the item: "GROUND TO DEATH UNDER 'L' TRAIN—Body Mangled Beyond Possible Identification." I watched while the emergency crew collected all the pieces—large pieces and when they called out, "All Aboard!", went back in the car again and carelessly stretched out to sleep. But as the train rumbled and clattered heavily, ponderously on, while the still night grew colder and colder, and crystallized into dawn, I dreamed . . . of huge steel wheels rolling and rolling, wet with blood, with snowflakes that melted instantly upon contact with the metal; of huge steel wheels grinding and spattering bones and flesh; of upraised arms, mute mutilated torsos; guts . . .

Gar: will I be next, then? They had found his hat lightly poised between two ties, untouched. The engineer was a tall, fat, smiling chap, wearing a cap too small for his head. This was the tenth he'd "got", he said. The other nine hadn't been so lucky: they'd lived—for awhile. Like a thunderbolt in my brain, the question: What thoughts had this human being entertained, while he deliberately knelt and measured the distance from himself to the monster train, approaching? Was he any more miserable than I? Why was I so anxious to keep my own guts inside me?—

I took my eyes away from the grim pillars of the El. Forget it: it won't do you any good. I reached for my paper. It was no longer on the seat beside me. I looked up. A heavy-set fellow had seated himself at the table, and was reading it.

I guess I was just feeling uncommonly jumpy. Anyhow, I had a bad shock. The guy sitting there so calmly, reading the day's news, was the suicide of the night before! This impression was so strong and startling, that for the moment, I could not move. Integrated again were the large pieces and the small pieces: the shoulder with gaping wound where the head had been, pinned beneath the carriage of the train, the bits of flesh and bone strewn along the rails, the mangled legs, the hat jauntily reposing upon the cross-ties, the blotch of guts in the center of the gleaming crosstown trolley-tracks about which an awed crowd had collected; the body was made whole again, animated with moods and visions, it was turned into a jobseeker again, words spelled out backwards, a movie wound up wrong. With a wrenching effort of the will, I closed my eyes . . . and the obsession passed. I felt my cheeks

wet with tears, and inwardly cursed my weakness. Gulping the last of the coffee down, I glared squarely at the man.

He looked like a truckdriver or dishwasher, with a strong skull and serious, squinted eyes. Laboriously he pored over the Want-Ads, much pencilled by my own hand, and evidently found little that was encouraging. Somehow this big fellow seemed pathetic to me. He had muscles to heave a case or lift a great log, yet these muscles were valueless to him. Civilization had outsmarted men like him; machines had made a mockery of their strength. He glanced up from the paper and looked at me dully. He was intimidated by all the bustle and activity of a big city, which now bore no relation to his needs. I could read fear in his eyes. Probably the man had a family. Would he starve then? Would he turn bandit, or beg? I saw him look out the plate-glass window, at the base, relentless streets, and I saw a shudder pass over him.

I would have spoken to him, I think, and he would have responded in puzzled, sullen monosyllables, evasively, but an ejaculated greeting startled him, and he turned around. A little, weazened youth shook his hand and sat down beside him. It was lunch-hour; the place was crowding up with hurried diners.

The newcomer was comical with his air of animation and self-assurance. Well Jim, watcher doin'?

Herb Kruckman

What's new—nothin'? Still lookin' around fer somethin', eh? 'Stough. More 'n more guys outa woik, they say, than ever before. But wot's de use o' hangin' crepe, I say to 'em. I just got a raise, coupla months ago. I ain't got nothin' to kick about. Know dat dame I useter go out wid? —Jim nodded—Well, I got anudder now. Boy, you wanna see her! Some dame. Nifty. See dis suit?—Jim saw it. Dis ain't no 22.50 rag. Feel it: go ahead, don't be afraid. Some cloth, eh? All wool and a yard wide. Forty-two bucks is wot dis stood me.

The little fellow sort of squared off, pugilistically, daring the other to disbelieve him. Then he went on: Ya got be pretty smart, nowadays. I don't let nobody put nothin' over on me.

He was full of small talk. Finally, he got up. Aincher gettin' nothin', Jim? Coffee? No?—He hesitated for a moment.—Well, I guess I'll get me some ham 'n eggs . . . And he walked off toward the counter, a little wiseguy in natty clothes, cocky, puny, and puerile. The man called Jim kept gazing soberly out at the streets, the lines around his mouth deepened, despair in his eyes, unconscious defeatism in slouched shoulders and apathetic hands.

Sure you'll get a job soon, Jim. You gotta live, eh? You gotta be smart, that's wot. Jumping under a train won't help very much. Naw. On the other hand, maybe you were not cut out to be a little pimp. Nature fashioned you differently. It's a problem, Jim, it's a "problem."

So I got up, feeling a little empty and jagged and not so steady on my pins, and shuffled over to the 42nd Street Library, to read a book.

When I got down near the Library, I got thinking about Jim. Funny the ideas a guy gets on an empty stomach. But I thought I'd hate like hell to be in Jim's way if he and a lot of others got it into their heads to go out and *take* enough to eat, job or no job. I'd been hearing some of them talk that way.

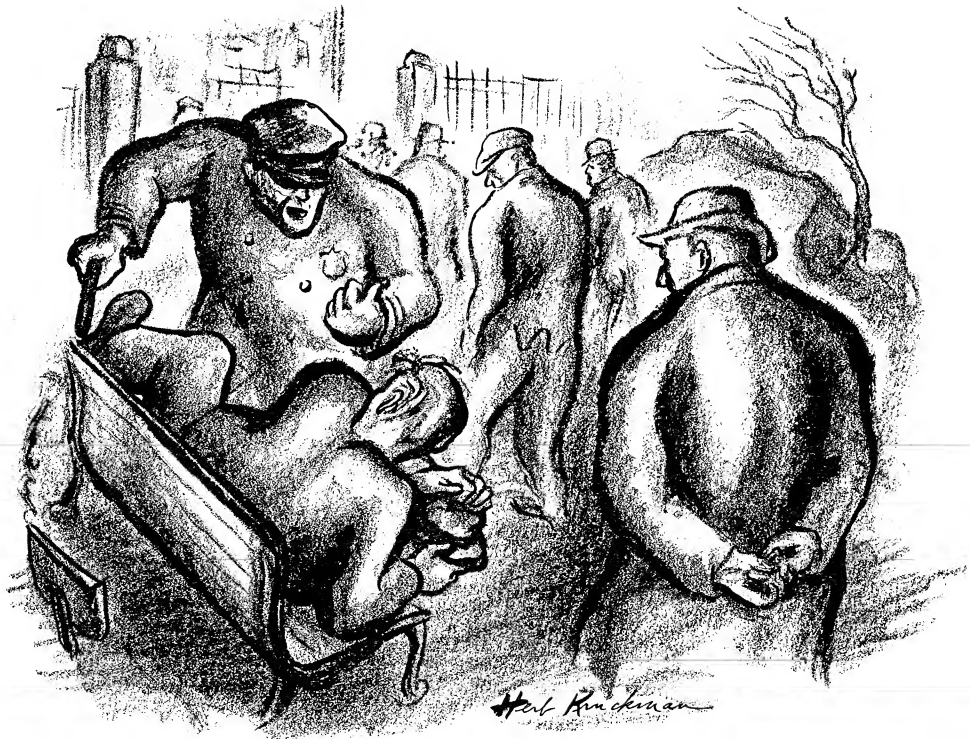
TO ANY ROOSTER

*Crow them up, my crimson friend,
From the sleep that tethers —
Brave alarm-clock of the sun,
Gay Big Ben with feathers!*

*Come, earth's living time-piece, come!
Break the night that cumbers,
Striking the red hour of day
To our witless slumbers.*

*Sound the hour to the sun
In gay affirmation;
Like a living crimson clock,
Waken all creation!*

E. MERRILL ROOT



"C'mon, Get Goin'!"

Herb Kruckman



"C'mon, Get Goin'!"

Herb Kruckman

BOOKS

Some Poets to the Left

Chelsea Rooming House, by Horace Gregory. Covici-Friede. \$2.00.
Unrest: The Rebel Poet's Anthology. Edited by Ralph Cheyney and Jack Conroy. Braithwaite and Miller. (London) \$1.00.
Red Renaissance, by H. H. Lewis. B. C. Hagglund, Publisher. 25c.

The October Revolution and the intensifying struggle for power between the classes have made the ivory tower an uncomfortable dwelling place. In our period, poets have lost their aloofness. It is hardly the fashion to deprecate partisan verse since it has become plain that even the most innocent song is pretty apt to conceal ammunition; and that not alone religion, but art as well serves as a capsule for intellectual opium. The editors of *Unrest* note in their introduction that poets themselves are recognizing this, that an increasing number of them are openly taking sides on one side or the other.

But even after we accept the principle it is still not always easy to recognize our friends and foes. Some of the loudest shouters for the proletariat may be, because of their own confusion or because their battle cry drowns out their opportunism, its secret enemies. Or a writer who seems hardly aware of the catch-words, who never mentions the class struggle or the workingclass, may still properly belong to the Revolution. Such a man, I think, is Horace Gregory.

It is still necessary to discuss technique, perhaps more so now, when in the first heat of discovery sympathy and a good heart can be taken for value, than ever before. And it is necessary to note that Horace Gregory, is at the very least potentially a great poet. He would be that regardless of his direction. His forms are not always simple, but he never mistakes complexity for profundity. And when, as in the poem "Homestead" his verse is simple, it is never degraded nor thin. His writing always has power, dignity and honesty.

In his thinking he has not yet reached the stage of affiliation with the advancing masses, although to those of us who have been watching his work the direction is plain. But now he is recording, not advance, but the dissolution and decay of the bourgeoisie—but recording it consciously, vigorously and never sentimentally. "McCumber Bluethorn, millionaire," his poem says

*Expects to die
 in the inevitable stronghold for his nerves and tissues.
 The bright machinery that was his mind falls silent.*

*His factories (men in the street
 crying out against him and the quick rifles of the State Militia
 are quiet now). . . .*

*His mind, fallen inward, stirs no more,
 only the house rises;
 count the bricks, the stones
 and estimate their power. . . .*

I should like, too, to mention Horace Gregory's poem "O Metaphysical Head", which I think (if there is any such thing) one of the great poems of our time, in its substance and form. It is a hymn to John Brown. It is the song of persecution and of his living power: it is a song to every revolutionist and to revolution itself.

John Brown's body lies—
 John Brown's body lies—
 John Brown's body lies—
 Its head goes marching on—
 triumphant, bowing to its friends,
 lost in a crowd, then bright as dawn
 found again, shining through the streets. . . .

I wish that the *New Masses* would still reprint this poem in full.

Unrest is difficult to review. Some of the writers, I am told, are workers. In many of the poems there is a good deal of simple power. But it is difficult to disconnect the parts from the whole. And the venture itself is often trivial and bombastic. It is hard to read past the first paragraph of the introduction in which Cheyney and Conroy have written: "This book should be suppressed. Poets at their best are also prophets—ambassadors of the future, destroyers of the present. They impregnate time with their dreams

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and what they conceive the future delivers. They impregnate time with their dreams and what they conceive the future delivers. They feel and express what the age lacks. Poets are rebels . . . Poets are pioneers of consciousness . . . This book should be suppressed because it is full of mental T.N.T. for blowing up capitalism."

Phuie, comrades, phuie.

And yet the book contains fine things by Walter Snow, by Frank Thibault ("Two Men Dropped off a Red Ball at San Pedro one Afternoon" . . .), by Joseph Kalar, Norman Macleod, Jim Waters, and others. Some of the writers in this group should seriously reconsider their affiliation with men and women who apparently believe that the Chase National Bank trembles a little every time a poet writes a tetrameter; and who seem to visualize the Proletarian Revolution as the background for poets. A book of proletarian verse should not force the record of workers' rebellion to rub shoulders with "Ninevah a broken dream. . . . Egypt is a turgid stream".

H. H. Lewis, author of *Red Renaissance* is also one of the *Unrest* group. His verse is agitational in character. He writes without a lot of skill, but with the power and fury that comes from sincerity and conviction of the things that make a workers' life: hunger, Sacco-Vanzetti and the hope of workers in the Soviet Union.

MELVIN P. LEVY

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Brusski, by F. Panferov. International Publishers, \$1.50.

Dog Lane, by Lev Goomilevsky, the Vanguard Press, \$2.00.

It is too bad that *Brusski* suffers so from technical defects. The structure is confused, muggy, disjointed. It is hard to follow the narrative or to distinguish the characters (called now by first name, now by its diminutive, now by two or three names together which is confusing enough even to one who has lived in Russia but must be utterly bewildering to anyone not on to these tricks of nomenclature). And yet this book has moments of greatness. Just as it portrays the struggle for the collective, so it portrays the struggle for new literature which grows out of life and nourishes life. Mighty forces move through this book. The forging of the new village out of the old, the building of a collective farm, the recreation of the peasant.

Toward the end is one of the finest bits in the book. The peasants have been brought together to build a dam. For a time the collective work goes smoothly, vigorously. Then, when it comes to deciding which allotments are to be watered first, things go wrong, and suddenly the peasants are all fighting senselessly, bestially, grovelling in the mud, slashing out at one another, killing and maiming. The next day life goes on as before under the hot sun. The peasants are in the courtyards feeding their animals, in their fields tending their crops. When their chores are done those who were fighting each other so violently crowd silently into the courtyard of the man they have killed in their madness—Ognev, the finest of all the peasants, whose will had kept the collective farm together. As he dies he says to one of the peasants who has held out against the collective:

"You're a child, Yegor, a child. If I'm not here . . . there'll always be enough of us to carry on . . . But you, where is your immortality? You're only a . . . day laborer . . ."

Dog Lane is concerned with sex problems among Communist Youth showing, as the editor of the *New Masses* put it when he sent me the book "what happens when you stay out late at night". Its elements are those of lurid sex melodrama. This young Soviet writer has treated the tortured human beings of his tragedy as a young medical student might dissect a corpse, lifting out and analyzing the different parts of the anatomy, fitting them into text book knowledge, without any comprehension of the intricate mechanism of the body as a whole. Goomilevsky has created each of his characters according to formula, and his book is more of a tract than a novel. What he is trying to show is that the conception that the body is merely a machine and that sex impulses must be treated like hunger, and gratified for the sake of efficiency, is disastrous, and that sensible persons can combine romance and party efficiency. A pretty youthful performance on the whole, but not without interest.

JESSICA SMITH

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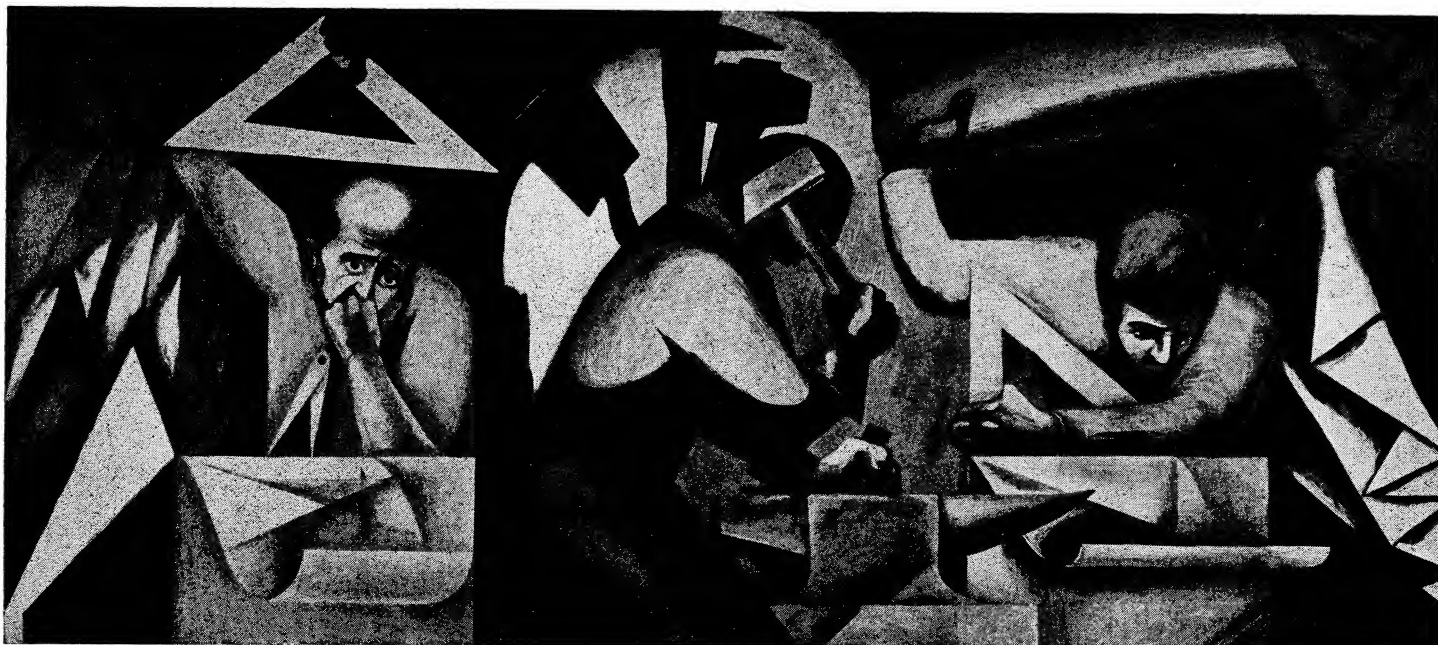
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WORKERS THEATRE OLYMPIAD

New Masses:

Since no previous mention of this had been made, we want to bring to the attention of *New Masses* the little Theatre Olympiad held by the Hungarian Dramatic groups in New York City on November 23 at the Turn Hall.

Three dramatic groups with a total membership of about 100 participated in what is to our knowledge the first proletarian competition. All groups presented one-act plays, the audience making its decision by vote.

The Uj Elore Dramatic Club, chosen by the audience, presented *Peter Es a polzari lelkiismeret* (*Peter Meets a Petty Bourgeois Conscience*), a Hungarian play, acted by 8 members of the club.

Although the club was voted winner, a number of speakers from the audience explained that this was due not to the best presentation alone, but especially because the play itself was the most class conscious, the best for a workers group. Otherwise, the speakers explained, the award would have been made to the Astoria Hungarian Dramatic Club, with 14 players, who gave the peasant drama *Servusz Sara* (*Good Wife Charlotte*) in a splendid presentation, well acted. In the discussion, the losing comrades of the Astoria group announced they would appear soon with a strong revolutionary play and again challenged the other groups to another competitive evening.

The Bronx Hungarian Dramatic Club presented Harbor Allen's play *Mr. God Is Not In* and was voted third because of weakness in presentation.

Another Olympiad is being planned by the three groups for the near future. Meanwhile the Uj Elore Dramatic Club is presenting a stage version of John Reed's *Ten Days That Shook the World* on March 1st.

The Bronx Hungarian group is preparing a new version of Paul Sifton's play, *The Belt*, adaptation being made by Martin Stone.

On Saturday, January 24, a successful proletarian cabaret was held, in which a new Soviet one-act play, *The New Way of Life*, was given. On the program, also, was Phil Bard, *New Masses* artist, whose cartoons were received enthusiastically by the worker audience.

Fraternally,

WILLIAM WEINBERG

New York, N. Y.

FEDERATION OF WORKERS CHORUSES

New Masses:

The Federation of Workers Choruses in New York and vicinity, formed in October 1930, now includes the following groups: Estonian, Finnish, Freiheit (Jewish), Hungarian, Yugoslav, Lithuanian, Ukranian and the W. I. R. English chorus, totalling a membership of about 700.

The Federation participated jointly in the Lenin Memorial meeting held a few days ago in Madison Square Garden. About 350 singers took part. Comrade Ruth Shellan, leader of the Lithuanian Chorus led the singing of the "International" while the rest of the songs on the program were led by Comrade Jacob Schaefer, leader of the Jewish Freiheit choruses.

The activities of the Federation now centering in New York, Brooklyn and Newark, will be extended to other cities in the East. Plans are being made for closer cooperation between all choruses; enlargement of membership; the attraction of new groups; and the joint participation with the revolutionary workers in all their struggles.

The Federation sends proletarian greetings through *New Masses* to all workers cultural groups and announces we are now participating in the preliminary conferences which will lead soon to the formation of the National Federation of all Workers Cultural groups.

PAUL KELLAR, Secretary.

131 West 28 Street
New York, N. Y.

JOHN REED CLUB SPEAKERS

Bill Gropper, A. B. Magil and Harry Alan Potamkin, recently returned from Soviet Russia where they attended the international conference of revolutionary writers and artists at Charkov, are available for speaking dates. In addition to discussing the conference, Gropper can speak on revolutionary art, Potamkin on Soviet and American movie, and Magil on the trial of the eight counter-revolutionary engineers which he attended as the correspondent of the *Daily Worker*. Other members of the John Reed club are also available as speakers. Workers' Clubs in New York and nearby towns are asked to communicate for rates and speaking dates with Sender Garlin, 80 E. 11 St., Room 430, New York, N. Y.



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WORKERS' ART

A monthly department for reports and discussion of Workers' Cultural Activities.

Credo of a Soviet Movie Director

1. The essential difference between the Soviet cinema and all other cinema is the absence, in our production, of commercial goals. The Soviet cinema is an educational and artistic institution.

2. This situation places the director in an exceptionally favorable position. The Soviet director can devote more time to questions of form, to experimentation and to a profound examination of the content of this film.

3. I am an Ukrainian director.

4. I have produced three important films: *Zvenig-Gora*, *Arsenal*, *Soil*. In the first I endeavored to show the status of an Ukrainian village in 1929, that is, at a time when there were taking place transformations not only of an economic nature, but also changes in the mentality of the masses.

5. For these three films I assembled a social documentation. I showed our land; its history, customs, social conditions, its struggles and ideals.

6. My principles are:

(a) I have no interest in stories in themselves. I use them only to the extent that they are useful in giving a maximum translation of important social forms;

(b) That is why I work upon typical documents and apply the synthetic method. My heroes are representatives of their class. Their actions likewise.

(c) The documentation of my films is con-

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centrated at times to the very limit; at the same time I pass it through the emotional prism. I never remain indifferent before documents; one must know how to love fully and strongly, and also to hate, otherwise, all works remain dogmatic and dry.

7. I utilize actors, but more so people chosen from crowds. My documentation requires this. One must not fear people who are not professional actors. One must well remember that every man can act perfectly for the screen at least once.

8. When I choose professional actors, I make every effort to see to it that their roles in the film do not impress the spectator with their profession.

9. Out of the consideration to the other persons in my films, I use every method which will permit me to obtain desired results with the least possible difficulty.

10. I think that *Soil* will be my last silent film.

11. My next film will be sonal and talking and I hope that the application of words and sound will not make me deviate from the direction in which I have been working until now.

ALEXANDER DOVZHENKO

(Translated from the French by S. Brody.)

Chicago Exhibit

The Palm Club of proletarian artists and writers will hold an art exhibition and dance on February 27 at the People's Auditorium, 2457 West Chicago Avenue, Chicago. The exhibit, arranged by Comrade Jan Wittenber, will consist of drawings and paintings by *New Masses* artists and members of the John Reed Club of New York, along with the work of a number of Chicago painters of note. A new collection of posters from Soviet Russia will be included.

The exhibit will also be on view at the Workers Book Store, 2021 West Division Street, Chicago, under the direction of S. H. Hammersmark.

Maurice Becker—New York painter, was one of the founders of the *Masses* in 1910.

Melvin P. Levy—critic, novelist, contributing editor to *New Masses* has just completed his third novel for early publication.

Jessica Smith—is author of *Women in Soviet Russia*.

Charles Yale Harrison—is author of *Generals Die in Bed*, published last year, and a new novel, *A Child Is Born*, now on the press.

Norman Macleod—editor of *The New Morada*, is also American editor of *Front*, published in Holland.

Herb Kruckman—young artist of White Plains, N. Y., makes his first appearance in *New Masses*.

William Siegel—New York artist, illustrator, is contributing editor of *New Masses*.



Herman Spector—Born 1905 in New York City, and has never been farther west than 10th Avenue. Left high school after three years, the loser in a passionate struggle for a vital education, to fulfill the prediction of a pedagogue: "You'll turn out to be a ditchdigger or a Bolshevik". Worked, toward this end, as lumber handler, shipping clerk, truck driver, streetcar conductor, laborer, baker's helper, W. U. "mutt", factory hand, butcher boy, envelope addresser, canvasser, soda jerker. Now married, father of a 3-year old girl, and engaged in writing a novel. Contributed to *Exile*, *The American Caravan*, *Free Verse*, *Anthology of Revolutionary Poetry*, *Transition*, *Unrest*, etc. Contributing Editor of *New Masses*. Member of the John Reed Club.

IN THIS ISSUE

Hugo Gellert—is now at work on a book of about 100 lithographs and text based on *Capital* by Karl Marx.

Langston Hughes—author of *Not Without Laughter*, published last fall, is now at work on a new novel. He has just been announced the winner of the Harmon Award for the most significant contribution in literature made by a Negro in the past year.

Jacob Burck—is staff artist on the *Daily Worker*.

Phil Bard—young New York artist, is a frequent contributor to *New Masses*.

Robert Cruden—Detroit auto worker, lost his job at the Ford factory in the recent general layoff.

I. Klein—contributor to the magazines, is executive board member of *New Masses*.

Agnes Smedley—author of *Daughter of Earth*, is now in Shanghai, China.

Otto Soglow—illustrator, cartoonist, is a frequent contributor to the magazines.

William Gropper—author of *Alay Oop!*, a story in pictures, has just returned from Soviet Russia.

Louis Lozowick—New York artist, is secretary of the John Reed Club.



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